



THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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By HARRY MOORE.



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OR,

Breaking in New Recruits.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

CHAPTER I.

THE AWKWARD SQUAD.

"Air ye ther Liberty Boys?"

"We are."

"Waal, we wanter jine ye."

"You do?"

"Yas."

"All of you boys?"

"Yas, all uv us."

It was the first week in May of the year 1781.

The place was a little clearing in the timber in Virginia, at a point perhaps six miles from Richmond.

The scene was an encampment of about one hundred youths of an average age of eighteen years, though some were at least twenty-one years old.

These youths were the famous "Liberty Boys of '76."

The Liberty Boys had operated chiefly in the North under the commander-in-chief; but at the time of which we write they had been sent down to Virginia to assist General Lafayette, who was doing all he could to hold Arnold in check.

Arnold, the traitor, was in command of the British force at Richmond, and he was putting in his time, burning and pillaging the patriot homes of the vicinity.

Benedict Arnold had deteriorated greatly since having played the traitor to the patriot cause. When a member of the patriot army none were braver than he, none more dashing, none more admired for their soldierly qualities; but now he was different. He was afraid that he might be captured and hanged as a traitor, and this

made a coward of him, so that about all he was capable of doing was making war on the unprotected homes of the patriot settlers in the vicinity of Richmond.

He had done a good deal of damage, and Lafayette, while having held Arnold in check to some extent, was unable to do as much as he would have liked to have done.

The Liberty Boys had just arrived—that is to say, they had been there only one day, but they had struck a marauding party of redcoats a blow and had killed and wounded a number and scattered the rest in all directions. This news had spread throughout the neighborhood, and a number of country youths of the vicinity had become imbued with a desire to distinguish themselves, and the result was that about a dozen of them had appeared at the encampment of the Liberty Boys, and, as has been seen, had stated that they wished to become members of the company.

The leader of the party of country youths had addressed Dick Slater, the captain of the Liberty Boys, as given above.

Dick hardly knew what to say about the matter.

He did not know whether it would pay to take hold of an awkward squad just at this time or not.

He was not sure that he would have the time to drill them and teach them what it was necessary that they should know before they could be of much benefit to his company.

"What is your name?" asked Dick.

"Joe Skupp."

"Are you sure that you wish to join our company and fight for liberty?"

"Yas," eagerly; "we all do, sir."

"I warn you that there is a great deal more work than play about it."

"That's all right; we hain't erfaid uv work."

Dick called Bob Estabrook, his chum and right hand man, to one side.

"What do you think about taking them in, Bob?" he asked.

"I hardly know, Dick. You know best."

"It is no easy task to break in new recruits."

"I know that."

"And I really haven't the time for the work."

"You might do it of evenings, Dick."

"Yes, I could give them some time."

"They are husky looking young fellows."

"So they are; if they once learned what was expected of them they would be valuable acquisitions, without doubt."

"Well, they may pick it up quicker than you think."

"That is true. They look green, but they may be brighter than they look."

"You are right."

"I've a good mind to give them a chance."

"I believe that I would, if I were you."

"I can give them a chance and see how they take to the work; and if they seem to learn quickly then I will keep on with them."

"Yes; and if they are so dumb as to make headway slow and difficult then you can send them back home."

"You are right; I will give them a trial."

He went back to where the dozen country youths stood, and said:

"Did your parents consent to your coming and joining us?"

Joe Skupp nodded.

"Yas," he said; "they wuz willin' fur us ter do et."

"Very well, then; I will give you a chance, and if you take hold and learn quickly then you may become members of the company."

The faces of the country youths brightened.

"Thank ye," said Joe.

"That is all right; I see you have no weapons. How are you going to be soldiers without weapons?"

The youths looked blank.

They looked at one another sheepishly, and grinned in an embarrassed manner.

"Never mind; we will soon be able to get hold of some weapons, I am sure," said Dick. "But you will have to have horses, too."

"We kin git horses ter hum," said Joe.

"All right; but you won't need them for awhile. You must first learn something about military tactics. I must drill you, and that will take some time. After that you may bring your horses, and then you will be ready to accompany us and help fight the redcoats."

"All right," said Joe.

"Give them a lesson, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes, yes!" in chorus, from a number of the youths.

The Liberty Boys were eager to see Dick begin, for they expected that there would be considerable to be seen that would be amusing.

Dick pointed to some muskets stacked near at hand.

"Each of you take a musket," he ordered.

The country youths did as told, though they had considerable trouble in getting the bayonets disentangled.

When they were ready Dick told them to stand up in a line.

They obeyed, but the line was very much the shape of one of the rail fences to be seen on every hand.

Dick told them to arrange themselves in a straight line, and they did so, as nearly as was possible.

Then he began the work of drilling the awkward squad.

It was hard work breaking the new recruits in.

Dick was patient, however, and was as kind to and gentle with the youths as discipline would permit.

The other Liberty Boys enjoyed watching, and they admired Dick more and more, as they saw the good work he was doing.

There were many things that were amusing, and the youths enjoyed themselves watching the awkward movements of the new recruits.

The country boys did the best they could, but of course that was not very good.

Whenever they made a bad blunder they laughed as heartily as did the Liberty Boys.

Dick worked perseveringly, and in an hour's time had taught the youths considerable; and they were able to go through some simple maneuvers very well indeed.

"Now stack your muskets," he told them, in conclusion.

They attempted to do this, but found it a very difficult matter.

So difficult was it, indeed, that they could not make a success of it, and some of the Liberty Boys had to come to their assistance.

The muskets were quickly arranged satisfactorily then, and the country youths, flushed and perspiring, but happy, sat down to talk to the Liberty Boys.

"D'ye think we'll make sojers, Cap'n Slater?" asked Joe, eagerly and anxiously.

"I think you will, Joe," was the reply. "I will say that you did better than I expected you would do."

"I am glad uv that."

"You did finely," said Bob.

"Yes, indeed," from Mark Morrison.

"I didn't think we wuz doin' very good," grinned one of the youths; "ye fellers done a lot of laffin' at us."

"Oh, of course there was plenty for us to laugh at," said Bob; "but so would there have been had it been us who were starting in. You did well."

The country youths were well pleased, and declared that they would do their best to learn all that was necessary, so that they might go with the company and help fight the redcoats.

"Two or three more practice drills and you will be in

a position to go with us," said Dick; "then you may bring your horses."

"We'll do et."

The members of the awkward squad said that they wanted to begin the life of a soldier at once, so they remained in the encampment instead of going to their homes.

They might as well get used to camp life one time as another, they declared.

"Very good," said Dick; "and we will let you stay here when we are away, and look after the camp."

This suited the youths first rate. They felt that they were being of some use in doing this.

They ate supper with the Liberty Boys and lay down when night came, and went to sleep like logs. They were hardy youths and could endure the hardships of camp life splendidly.

Next morning the Liberty Boys got ready and, mounting their horses, rode away to look for marauding bands of redcoats.

The members of the awkward squad were left to take charge of the camp and see to it that nobody came and carried away any of the provisions or camp utensils.

As an afterthought Dick had left muskets for the members of the awkward squad.

"Now, if any redcoats or Tories put in an appearance fight them," the youth said. "Don't let them run you away."

"All right," said Joe; "we'll do et."

When the Liberty Boys had taken their departure the new recruits took up the muskets and sat there, waiting and watching.

They felt that they were doing something, and were satisfied.

They did not expect that they would be called upon to fight, but they made up their mind that they would fight if the necessity arose.

Presently Joe, who was looked upon as the leader or commander in the absence of the Liberty Boys, thought of the fact that they ought to have sentinels stationed; so he sent out two of the youths to stand guard.

They stood guard until the middle of the forenoon, and then two more took their places.

The new sentinels had been on guard only a little while when they caught sight of a force of British troopers coming down the road.

There were about twenty of the troopers.

The two hastened to the camp and told Joe that some redcoats were coming.

He looked disconcerted.

He had not expected that he would be confronted with a problem of this character. But the redcoats were coming, and something would have to be done.

"D'y'e think they'll fin' ther camp, Joe?" asked one of the youths.

"Like's not they will," was the reply.

"An' we air goin' ter fight 'em?"

"We hev got ter; Dick said fur us ter do et."

"Thet's so. We mus' fight an' drive ther redcoats erway, ef we kin."

Joe then told the youths to go over to the edge of the clearing and take up positions behind trees.

They obeyed, and had just done so when the British troopers put in an appearance.

The troopers gave utterance to exclamations when they saw the encampment.

They were on the point of leaping down off their horses, when Joe gave the signal to the youths to fire.

They already had the muskets leveled, and now they obeyed the command and pulled trigger.

Crash!

CHAPTER II.

DICK AND THE MESSENGER.

The volley came as a surprise to the troopers. They were not expecting anything of the kind.

They had supposed that the encampment had been deserted when they approached; but did not think that there was danger that they might be fired upon.

Had it been a dozen of the Liberty Boys who fired the shots eight or ten of the troopers would have fallen. But the country youths were not very good marksmen with muskets, so only one redcoat pitched from his saddle, although another reeled and almost fell.

While the volley did not do a great deal of damage, yet it alarmed the redcoats and they rode hastily away.

It was great relief to the country youths to see the enemy go.

They remained behind the trees, but feared the troopers would come charging toward them. Had the redcoats done so there can be little doubt regarding the result: The youths would have fled.

As it was they were reassured and quickly got their courage back to such an extent that they proceeded to reload the muskets.

They had just finished doing so when they saw the redcoats coming back.

The troopers had dismounted and were on foot.

They did not enter the clearing, but divided up into two parties and started to skirt the clearing.

This was rather disconcerting to the youths.

They realized that if they remained where they were they would be between two fires, as it were, and so Joe told the boys to retire deeper into the timber.

They obeyed, and again took up their positions behind trees.

They waited and watched and presently caught sight of some of the redcoats.

The troopers were not very expert in woodcraft, and could not conceal themselves behind trees to advantage, so they were more or less exposed.

Joe told his comrades to take aim and fire whenever they got a chance at a redcoat.

The youths began doing this, and had fired three or four shots before the troopers decided what to do.

The decision reached by the redcoats was that they should charge and make an attempt to get at close quarters with their enemies, and they came forward with a rush.

The country youths could not stand before the redcoats, and turned and fled at the top of their speed.

They were swifter-footed than the British troopers and gradually drew away. Seeing this, the redcoats fired a volley from their muskets.

One of the youths was wounded, but only slightly. It had the effect of making him run faster, that was all.

Joe Skupp was a pretty level-headed youth, even though he was green as regarded army affairs; and he led the youths in a half circuit, and took up his position around on the farther side of the clearing in which was the encampment.

He was determined to protect the encampment and keep the redcoats from taking the provisions and camp utensils if it was possible to do so.

The youths crouched behind the trees and waited and watched.

Presently they heard the voices of the troopers.

A few moments later the redcoats appeared at the opposite side of the clearing.

They paused and took a survey of the scene, and then advanced.

The truth was that they thought they had frightened the rebels away.

They had just reached the center of the encampment and were looking around them with interest when Joe gave the signal, and the dozen youths fired another volley.

They dropped two of the redcoats this time, and the rest were so amazed that they stood and stared for a few moments without making a move of any kind.

This gave the youths time, and they retreated to the timber and paused and reloaded their muskets.

The troopers had charged to the edge of the timber, and finding no one there, stopped, and were now discussing the situation.

The commander of the party decided that they had better take their wounded comrade—one was wounded and two were dead—and go back to where they had left their horses, mount and get away from the vicinity.

They were puzzled by the actions of the rebels, and consequently were very much worried. Had they known the number of the enemy they would have known better what to do; but as they could not tell how strong the enemy was they decided to take their chances.

They lifted their wounded comrade and carried him to where the horses had been left. The soldier was able to sit in the saddle, if steadied by the hand of a comrade.

The others mounted, after assisting the wounded man

to mount, and they set out in the direction of Richmond.

It was a victory for the new recruits to the Liberty Boys company, and they were delighted. They made sure that the enemy had gone, and then they went and looked at the two dead troopers.

They were somewhat awe-stricken, not to say horrified, for these were the first men they had ever killed.

"Waal, et's war times, boys," said Joe; "an' we air sojers; an' sojers can't ermount ter ennythin' ef they don' kill sumbuddy."

"Thet's so," said one; "on'y et seems kinder orful, don't et?"

"Yas, et does," from another.

"Let's bury 'em," said Joe.

The others acquiesced in this, for they did not like to see the corpses lying there; so they dug a grave and placed the two dead troopers in it and covered them up.

This done, the youths felt better.

They discussed the affair with a great deal of interest, and, to tell the truth, they were very proud of their own number to flight.

They were eager for the Liberty Boys to get back.

The youths put in an appearance about five o'clock in the afternoon.

Joe could hardly wait till the Liberty Boys had dismounted before telling of the encounter with the British troopers.

Dick was well pleased when he heard the story, and he did not hesitate to compliment Joe and his comrades.

"You did splendidly," he said; "I know now that you are going to be good soldiers."

"D'ye really think so?" asked Joe, eagerly.

"I am sure of it. Didn't the dozen of you put twenty redcoats to flight, after killing two and wounding another?"

"Yas."

"Well, that proves it. That is something that could hardly be expected of you. Had a dozen veterans accomplished this they would have been doing well; so it was really a remarkable achievement for you new recruits."

This pleased the youths immensely, and they felt very proud indeed.

Presently Dick told the youths to get some muskets and get ready to practice.

They obeyed, and soon the awkward squad was hard at work.

As on the evening before, the new recruits made lots of mistakes, some of them very amusing, and the Liberty Boys sat there and watched the work with interest, laughing heartily whenever the youths made an absurd blunder.

The members of the awkward squad took it good-naturedly, and usually joined in the laugh.

They went on with the work an hour or more, and then Dick said that they might stop.

They did so, and when he complimented them and told

them that they had done exceedingly well they were well pleased.

"When d'ye think we'll be good enuff sojers so that we kin go with ye an' he'p ye hunt ther redcoats an' fight 'em?" asked Joe.

"Day after to-morrow," was the reply. "You may remain in camp to-morrow and to-morrow evening I will put you through one more drill. Then you may get your horses and go with us the next time we start out."

"Thank ye, Cap'n Slater."

"The rest of the boys call me Dick," said the handsome young captain of the Liberty Boys; "so you boys may as well do so."

"All right; much obliged—Dick."

Just as they were finishing eating supper that evening the officer of the guard entered the encampment accompanied by a roughly dressed stranger.

They approached Dick, and the officer said:

"Here is a man who says he is the bearer of a message from General Lafayette, Dick."

"Ah, let me have the message," said the youth.

The man took a letter from his pocket and handed it to Dick, who tore it open and read the contents, which were as follows:

"Captain Slater: Kindly come to my encampment at once; I wish to see you on very important business. The messenger will act as your guide.

"Very respectfully,

"GENERAL LAFAYETTE."

"I have got to go with this man, boys," said Dick; "Bob, you will have command here until I return."

"Where are you going, old fellow?" asked Bob.

"To see General Lafayette."

"Where is his encampment?"

"I don't know; the messenger here is to guide me thither."

"How far is it to the patriot encampment?" asked Bob.

"About five miles," replied the messenger.

"We will go at once," said Dick.

They set out and were soon making their way through the timber in the direction of Richmond.

"Has Lafayette advanced close to Richmond?" asked Dick.

"Yes; his army was only about two miles from the city."

They walked along the road at a lively pace, for it was clear night and they could see plainly.

When they had gone perhaps two miles they heard a voice cry out:

"Help! Help!"

"Hello! I wonder what the trouble is?" cried the guide.

"I don't know," was Dick's reply; "somebody is in trouble, however; and it is no more than right that we should investigate a bit and see what the trouble is."

"I'm willing."

They hastened into the timber and ran in the direction from which the cries had proceeded.

"Where are you?" cried Dick.

"Here! Help! Help!"

The two ran onward, and again Dick called out:

"Where are you?"

There was no reply this time, but the two suddenly came upon a log cabin standing on the bank of a little creek.

"Perhaps the person who called for help has been taken in there," suggested Dick.

"Maybe so; we will soon know."

"Yes, so we will."

They advanced to the door and Dick lifted the latch and pulled the door open.

There were three men in the cabin, as could be seen by the light of a candle which stood on a table. One of the three was a prisoner, as was evident, his arms being bound.

Dick and the messenger boy stepped into the room, and at the same instant they drew and leveled their pistols.

"What does this mean?" asked Dick, sternly.

The two men who had the prisoner stared at the two intruders in open-mouthed amazement.

"W-who are y-you?" gasped one.

"We are men who will not see a fellowman misused," replied Dick; "now I want to know why you have made this man a prisoner."

"I don't see what right you have to ask any questions," was the sullen reply.

"The right of might; now answer."

"Well, he is a man who is wanted in Richmond."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you take him there, then, instead of coming to this old cabin?"

"We were going to do so right away."

"Well, you won't do so now, unless you can make out a good case and prove that you have the right to do so."

"Oh, won't we?"

"No."

There was a peculiar look on the faces of the two men. They did not seem to be alarmed, even though they were covered by the pistols in the hands of Dick and his companion, and Dick wondered at it.

"Well, we will see about this matter," retorted the spokesman of the two.

"You are right; we shall see about it," replied Dick. Then he addressed the prisoner.

"Who are you, sir?" he asked; "and why have they made you a prisoner?"

Before the man could reply—if indeed he had any intention of doing so—Dick was given an unpleasant surprise.

His companion, the messenger, suddenly dropped his pistol and threw his arms around Dick, pinioning the youth's arms to his side.

Dick was taken wholly by surprise.

He had not been expecting anything like this. That his companion was a traitor and an enemy had never for one moment entered his mind.

Yet that such was the case could not be doubted, now that he had thrown off the mask and come out as an enemy.

CHAPTER III.

THE TORIES IN RICHMOND.

Dick was taken wholly by surprise.

He had not been expecting anything like this.

That his companion was a traitor and enemy had never for one moment entered his mind.

Yet that such was the case could not be doubted, now that he had thrown off the mask and come out as an enemy.

Dick, although surprised, was not disposed to give up without a struggle.

He attempted to jerk loose from the pseudo messenger, but found this a difficult task.

He might have been able to do so had he been given time, but the two men who had been holding the prisoner leaped forward and aided the fellow who had seized Dick, and the three easily overpowered him.

They bound his arms, and then unbound the arms of the supposed prisoner, who was really one of the gang.

He turned toward Dick with a grin on his face, and the youth understood the matter at once.

This had been a prearranged affair to effect his capture.

To his chagrin, he had walked right into the trap.

But then he could not see that he was to be blamed for this. The affair had been very cleverly managed.

There had been nothing in the actions of the supposed messenger to arouse suspicion.

Dick did not as yet have a full understanding of the matter, of course.

He did not know who the four men were or why they had made a prisoner of him.

He decided to ask, and at once did so.

"So you wish to know who we are and why we have made a prisoner of you, eh?" remarked the pseudo messenger, with a smile.

"Yes."

"Very well; we are not rebels."

"I supposed as much; but neither am I."

"What are you, then?" he asked.

"A patriot."

"Ah, a distinction without a difference."

"There is a great deal of difference."

"I can't see it that way; but no matter, you are a patriot, we will say. We are loyalists, and we have cap-

tured you and are going to take you to Richmond and turn you over to General Arnold."

"Why are you going to do this?"

"For money."

Dick looked surprised.

"How will you make any money out of it?"

The man smiled in a significant manner.

"You are Dick Slater, captain of the company of young fellows known as the Liberty Boys, are you not?"

"I am not telling anything," said Dick, quietly; "I may, and then, again, I may not be the person you mention."

"We know that you are, and we know, also, that there is a reward of five hundred pounds on your head."

Dick started.

Now he understood why he had been made a prisoner.

"So that's the reason, is it?" he remarked.

"Yes; and it is a good one. Five hundred pounds is a lot of money."

"Yes, so it is; but you won't get the money if you take me to Richmond and turn me over to Arnold."

"Why not?"

"Because he hasn't the authority to pay you the money, and I very much doubt whether he has the amount."

The four men looked somewhat worried.

"Well," said the leader, presently, "we will take you to Richmond and turn you over to Arnold, and he will turn you over to Cornwallis or Howe later on, and then we will get the money."

"Perhaps so; but I doubt it. The best thing you can do is to give up this idea and let me go back to my friends."

The men shook their heads.

"We won't do that," said the pseudo messenger; "we know we would get nothing that way, and by delivering you into the hands of the British we stand a chance to get something, at any rate."

While talking Dick was thinking of some plan for effecting his escape.

He was determined that these rascally Tories should not take him to Richmond.

They had played a shrewd trick, which had succeeded so far, but he made up his mind that he would fool them yet.

The cabin was lighted by a single candle which stood on a rough table in the center of the room.

This was only a short distance from where Dick stood, and suddenly he leaned forward and blew the light out. At the same instant he leaped backward toward the door, which, as he knew, was open.

Exclamations of anger and surprise escaped the lips of the Tories and they grabbed at Dick.

His movements had been so quickly executed, however, that the Tories, instead of getting hold of him, got hold of one another, and in another instant they were struggling fiercely. Each man thought he had hold of the prisoner, and before they could discover their mistake Dick was out of the cabin and running toward the road as ra-

pidly as he dared in the darkness and with his arms bound.

The four Tories upset the table in their struggles with one another, and then suddenly discovered that they were fighting each other instead of having hold of the prisoner, and desisted and hastened out of the cabin.

"After him!" cried the pseudo messenger. "He will go straight back to the Liberty Boys' encampment."

"He can't run fast with his hands bound together behind his back," from another.

"That's so," from a third.

They ran as rapidly as they could, and as they advanced they spread out fan shape, so as to avoid passing the fugitive.

They reached the road without having seen the escaped prisoner, however, and without hesitating a moment they set out upon the road.

Had Dick been an ordinary youth the Tories would no doubt have overtaken him without a great deal of difficulty; but he was more than an ordinary youth. He was a remarkably fast runner, and even with his arms bound he was able to run faster than his pursuers could possibly go.

The result was that the Tories lost ground instead of gaining, and Dick drew away and succeeded in getting back to the Liberty Boys' encampment.

When he reached there, panting and nearly exhausted, with his arms bound together behind his back, the youths were almost paralyzed with amazement.

They leaped up with exclamations and excited questionings.

"What's the matter?"

"Where did you come from?"

"Who tied your arms?"

"Why have you been running?"

"Where is the messenger?"

Such were a few of the questions.

"Untie my arms and then I will tell you all about it," said Dick.

Bob Estabrook leaped forward and cut the ropes that bound Dick's wrists.

"Now tell us about it," he said; "how came you to be tied up in that fashion?"

Dick told them, and when the Liberty Boys learned that the messenger was a trickster and a Tory they were very angry.

"I'd like to have my hands on the scoundrel for about five minutes!" said Bob, a grim look on his face.

"So would I!" from Mark Morrison.

"Say, that was a clever scheme, writing a letter and signing General Lafayette's name to it and bringing it here to you, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes; it was clever and bold."

"You are right; for it might have been that you were familiar with the general's handwriting, in which case the cheat would have been discovered."

"True; but I had never seen any of the general's handwriting, so did not know the difference."

"Well, you fooled the scoundrels, Dick."

"Yes; but I would like to do more than that."

"You would like to capture them, eh?"

"Yes."

"Supposing some of us go out and make a search for them?"

Dick shook his head.

"It would do no good," he said. "They are too smart to permit themselves to be captured."

"Likely you are right."

"Send the new recruits out after the Tories," said Sam Sanderson, with a grin. He said it in such a low voice that the youths in question did not hear him.

"Well, that might not be as bad an idea as you think for, Sam," said Dick.

He did not put the suggestion into effect, however, as he thought the gang would not be at the hut, and a little later the youths lay down and went to sleep—all save the sentinels.

The four Tories followed Dick until they arrived in the vicinity of the patriot youths' encampment, and then they paused and held a council.

"We have let the rebel escape," said the leader; "but there is one thing that we can do."

"What is that?" asked one.

"We can go to Richmond and tell General Arnold about the Liberty Boys, and he can send a force up here to capture them."

This seemed to meet with the approval of the others, and one said:

"Let's do that; if we don't get the money that we would have received had we taken Dick Slater to Richmond we will have the satisfaction of knowing that we were instrumental in causing the capture of himself and a number of his men."

"Yes, so we can; come along."

They set out at once, and walked as rapidly as possible.

An hour and a half later they arrived at the edge of the city of Richmond and were immediately challenged by a sentinel.

They explained to the sentinel that they were loyalists who had come for the purpose of giving General Arnold some valuable information, and he told them to pass on.

They did so and went to British headquarters, where, after some delay, they were admitted.

The leader of the party—the one who had pretended to be a patriot messenger, and whose name was James Collins—was admitted to the private room of General Arnold.

When Arnold saw the blue uniform worn by the newcomer he looked at him sharply.

"Where did you get that uniform?" he asked.

"Off a dead man's body," was the reply.

"Where was this?"

"About five miles away, up in the country."

"He was a rebel soldier, eh?"

"Yes."

"You killed him?"

The Tory nodded.

"Whose army did he belong to, do you know?"

"To General Lafayette's, I think."

Arnold was silent a few moments, and then he said:

"What is your name?"

"James Collins."

"You are a loyalist?"

"I am."

"Why did you don the rebel uniform?"

Collins explained that he had done it in order that he might venture into the camp of the Liberty Boys, posing as a patriot messenger from General Lafayette. He told how he and his three comrades had captured Dick Slater, the captain of the company of Liberty Boys, and how the youth had escaped. Then he went on to explain that he had come to headquarters to bring information regarding the rebels, and that they were ready to guide a party of British soldiers to the place where the youths were encamped.

"Good!" said General Arnold; "that will be all right. I will send a force there this very night."

Then he asked how far it was to the encampment of the Liberty Boys.

"About six miles."

Arnold pondered awhile, and then said:

"I think that, after all, I won't send the force out until the morning. I will order that it be ready to leave here at an early hour, so as to reach the rebel encampment about daylight, and then an attack can be made."

"It may be possible to surround the encampment," said Collins.

"True; I will send about three hundred men, and they will be able to surround and capture the entire force, I feel sure."

"I have no doubt regarding it, sir."

"Very good; hold yourself in readiness to accompany the force as guide."

"I will do so, sir."

Then the Tory took his departure.

He was joined at the door by the other three Tories, and he told them what was to be done.

"We will go to the tavern and stay all night," he said; "and will get up early and come here and report for duty."

This was acted upon, and they were soon housed in a tavern not far from headquarters.

CHAPTER IV.

A BRAVE GIRL.

Before they had gone to bed, however—they having stopped in the barroom to take a few drinks—one of their

number, a man named Ben Stokes, said that he would go home, as his wife was sick.

"There ain't no use for me to stay here," he said; "so fur ez that is concerned, one of us would be ernuff ter guide ther force ter where ther rebels are."

"Thet's so; you kin go on home, Ben," said Collins; "there isn't any use of your staying."

So he took another drink, bade his comrades good-by, and took his departure.

He lived about four miles from Richmond, and as he was a good walker he arrived there at the end of an hour of swift walking.

When he entered the house he found that his wife was worse; she was quite sick, indeed, and he decided to sit up and watch over her all night.

His daughter Annie said that she would sit up with him, to keep him company.

"You needn't do that, Annie," he said. "If I need you I will call you."

"No; I will sit up, father," the girl said.

Presently the sick woman dozed off and the man and the girl began talking in low, cautious tones. They talked about the sick woman anxiously for awhile, and then the girl asked her father where he had been.

He told her about having captured the captain of the Liberty Boys, and how he had escaped, and how, afterward, they had gone to Richmond and informed General Arnold about the Liberty Boys, and how his three comrades were to guide a force to the rebel encampment early in the morning for the purpose of capturing the youths.

As Annie listened to this she grew pale, but her father did not notice it. The truth of the matter was that Annie was the sweetheart of Joe Skupp, and she knew that Joe and eleven more of the patriot youths of the vicinity had joined the Liberty Boys' company. Consequently, if the Liberty Boys were captured her sweetheart would be among them.

This was what made her grow pale. She realized that if Joe was captured by the British it would be a long time before she would see him again, if she ever did. He might be taken sick and die in prison in Richmond. And then, if there was a fight when the British made the attempt to capture the Liberty Boys, Joe might be killed.

She knew that the intention was to take the patriot youths by surprise, and if this should be done many of them might be killed or wounded. If they only had advance information of the attempt that was to be made to capture them they could easily get away and foil their enemies. But that was the trouble. They had no knowledge of this.

Then the girl was struck by an idea.

Why might she not go and warn the Liberty Boys?

True, she was the daughter of a Tory, but she had heard Joe talk so much that she had become imbued with patriotic ideas and sentiments.

She would not hesitate an instant on account of the fact that she was the daughter of a loyalist. The only

thing that troubled her was the fact that she could not get away without her father knowing it. It was two miles to the patriot encampment, and it would take her at least an hour and a half to make the trip there and back, and she could not be away that long without exciting the suspicions of her father.

While she was wondering what she could do her father turned to her, and said:

"Ye hed better go to bed, Annie; there hain't no use of both of us sittin' up."

This time the girl consented to do as her father suggested. Not that she wished to go to bed; but it would give her the chance that she desired—the chance to slip away from the house and carry the information to the Liberty Boys.

"Very well, father, since you wish it I will go to bed," she said; "but if you should need me, be sure to call me."

"I will, Annie."

Then she went to her room and closed the door.

Of course her father thought that she was going to bed, but she merely sat down on the side of the bed and waited a few minutes, after which she softly opened the window and climbed out through the opening.

She had pinned a small shawl on her head, and now she unhesitatingly hastened away through the timber.

She knew the way to the Liberty Boys' encampment. Joe had told her where it was.

She made her way along at as rapid a pace as possible, for she was in a hurry. Her father might call her, and would then find that she was gone.

She kept onward a little more than half an hour, and then came the challenge:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied the girl. She had heard that this was the thing to say when challenged in war times.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign," was the command.

The girl advanced, and when she was close to the sentinel he noticed that the newcomer was a girl.

"Hello! Who are you?" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"My name is Annie Stokes, and I want to see Joe Skupp."

"Oh, he is one of the new recruits," said the sentinel.

"Yes; he and some more of the boys of this vicinity have just joined the Liberty Boys' company."

"I know; they constitute our awkward squad. Well, pass on into the encampment, Miss Stokes. The officer of the guard will send Joe Skupp to you."

"Thank you."

The girl entered the encampment, and the officer of the guard came forward and greeted Annie courteously.

"Whom do you wish to see?" he asked.

"Joe Skupp," was the reply.

"Very well; I will awake him and send him to you at once."

He hastened away and woke Joe, who rose and made his way to where the girl stood. He was rubbing his eyes

sleepily, but when he saw who it was he became wide awake instantly.

"You heer, Annie!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Joe."

"Whut d'ye want?"

"I have some news for the Liberty Boys, Joe; and I thought that I would tell you, and then you can tell Captain Slater."

"All right; whut is et?"

"The British are going to send a force here to surround your encampment and take you prisoners."

"How d'ye know this, Annie?"

She told him.

"An they are comin' in ther mornin'?"

"Yes; they expect to be here by daylight."

"I'll go an' wake Dick up an' tell him about et at once."

"And I will go back home, Joe,"

"Wait, Annie, an' I'll go with ye."

"I'm not afraid, Joe; I slipped away, and father may discover that I am gone if I stay away too long."

"It won't take long ter wake Dick an' tell him, Annie."

"Well, I'll wait, then."

Joe hastened to where Dick lay and awoke him.

"Hello, Joe! What is the trouble?" he asked.

Joe told him.

"That is important news, Joe," he said; "but how did you learn about the matter?"

The youth explained.

"I must see this girl and make her acquaintance, Joe," he said. "I suspect, from what you have said and the way you look, that she is rather more to you than just an acquaintance, eh, old fellow?"

Joe blushed, as could be seen by the light of the campfire, and said:

"I guess ye're right, Dick."

"She's your sweetheart, then?"

"Yas; we're goin' ter be married when ther war is over."

"I'm glad to hear it; well, give me an introduction, old fellow."

"Come erlong."

Dick accompanied Joe to where Annie stood and was introduced to the girl.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance," he said; "and I thank you for the information which you have brought."

"You are welcome, Mr. Slater," was the reply.

When they had talked a few minutes the girl said she must be going home, and Joe asked if he might accompany her.

"Certainly," replied Dick; "we must not let her take the long walk through the timber and darkness alone."

"I came alone, Mr. Slater. I am not afraid."

"You are a brave girl; but that is no reason why you should be permitted to go home alone. Anyhow, I suspect that Joe really wishes to accompany you," and then Dick smiled, while Joe flushed up, and the girl blushed.

"Ye're pokin' fun at me, Dick," said Joe; "come on, Annie, let's go."

"Very well; good-by, Mr. Slater."

"Good-by, Miss Annie."

Joe and Annie set out, and Dick went back and awoke Bob and told him about the attempt that was to be made on the morrow to surround and capture them.

"Well, forewarned is forearmed," said Bob.

"Yes; now that we know what they intend trying to do, we will be in a position to spoil their plans."

"You are right; when they get here they won't find us, eh?"

"Well, they won't find us here sitting waiting for them to shoot us down, at any rate."

They talked the matter over, and it was decided to have the sentinels awaken the Liberty Boys at three o'clock. Then they would break camp and slip away, and thus fool the enemy.

Dick told the sentinels what he wished them to do, and they said that they would attend to the matter, or, if others were to take their places, they would tell them to attend to it.

Then Dick and Bob lay down again and went to sleep.

Meantime Joe Skupp and Annie Stokes were making their way through the timber in the direction of the girl's home.

They did not go very rapidly, for they had a great deal to talk about; but they arrived at their destination at last.

Then Joe bade the girl good-by and took his departure.

She got into the house without her father knowing anything about it; and then she opened the door a little ways and asked her father how her mother was.

"She seems to be better, Annie," was the reply; "go back to bed, child."

"Very well; but call me if you need me, father."

"I will."

Then she closed the door.

She felt happy; she had warned the Liberty Boys—and Joe.

CHAPTER V.

SURROUNDED.

"They are not here!"

"That's right; they have gone away."

It was morning.

The sun was just rising.

A force of British soldiers stood looking blankly at a vacant encampment at a point about six miles north from Richmond.

It was the force that General Arnold had sent out to surround and capture the Liberty Boys.

The British had marched northward until they were

close to the point where the Liberty Boys were supposed to be encamped, and then they had advanced slowly and cautiously, only to find, when at last they reached the spot, that the rebels were not there.

They had disappeared.

Then the above conversation had ensued between the guide and the commander of the force.

The guide looked uneasily around him.

"Hadn't we better look out?" he said. "Those Liberty Boys, so I have always heard, are dangerous fellows, and they may make an attempt to turn the tables by surprising us."

"Oh, I guess there isn't much danger of that," was the reply. "We have a much stronger force than theirs, and I don't believe they would dare try to attack us."

At this instant there came from the edge of the timber, just within musket-shot distance, the sharp command:

"Fire!"

Then on the air rose the roar of a volley.

A dozen of the redcoats fell to the ground dead and wounded.

Cries of anger and surprise escaped the lips of the uninjured; groans from the lips of the wounded.

"Charge the scoundrels, men!" cried the commander, and the soldiers obeyed.

Forward they dashed, straight toward the point from which the volley had sounded.

"Fire!" roared their commander.

The British soldiers fired a volley, as commanded.

They did not try to take aim, for there was no enemy in sight to aim at. But they fired at random, and it was only natural that they should fail to do much damage.

In among the trees rushed the redcoats.

They were eager to get at the enemy, to get revenge for the deaths of their comrades.

When they had penetrated into the timber a short distance, however, without seeing anything of the rebels, they paused in disappointment and disgust and made their way back.

They placed out guards and then attended to the wounds of the injured men and buried the dead soldiers.

"What are you going to do now, sir?" asked the Tory guide.

"I am going to stay in this vicinity until I get a chance to strike those cowardly rebels a blow," was the reply.

"Will you need me any more?"

"No; you may go."

The three Tories who had acted as guides made their way to their homes. One of the three had to pass the home of Ben Stokes, and he found Mr. Stokes out in the barnyard milking.

"Hello, Ben!" he called out. "How is your wife this morning?"

"She's better," was the reply.

"Glad to hear it."

"I heard firin' er little while ergo; did ther British come up an' s'prise ther rebels?"

"They came up, but the surprise was the other way."

"How was that?"

"The rebels surprised the British," and then he explained regarding the affair.

"Well, well! An' so that's the way uv et, hey?"

"Yes; the rebels must have got an inkling of the coming of the British and broke camp and got out of the way."

"Et looks that way."

"I don't suppose you went an' told them, Ben?" suspiciously.

"Mr. Stokes got red in the face.

"Ye know I didn't," he said.

"Oh, well, I didn't suppose you did; I only wondered how they did find out about the coming of the British, that is all."

"Et's more'n I can ever tell ye."

Then the Tory went on his way, leaving Mr. Stokes to finish milking the cows.

"Any news, father?" asked Annie, somewhat anxiously, as her father entered the house; "I saw you talking to Mr. Rogers."

"Yes, Annie. Ther British cum up from Richmond this mornin' but instead of surprisin' ther rebels, they wuz s'prised themselves, an' erbout'er dozen uv 'em wuz killed an' wounded."

"Were any of the pa—I mean rebels, killed, father?" in rather an anxious voice.

"No, Annie."

Mr. Stokes did not notice the look of pleasure and relief that appeared on his daughter's face.

They talked of the affair until breakfast was ready, the girl bustling around as she talked, and then they sat down and ate.

Meantime what of the Liberty Boys?

They had been aroused at three o'clock by the sentinels, as Dick had ordered, and had broken camp and moved away, leaving some scouts behind to apprise them of the approach of the British.

The scouts had done their work well and, as we have seen, when the British reached the spot where the youths had been encamped the Liberty Boys had managed to slip up to within musket-shot distance and had fired a volley with considerable effect.

Then they had retired quickly and noiselessly, and when the British advanced, firing as they came, the youths were clear out of harm's way.

Bob Estabrook wanted to slip back and fire another volley, but Dick Slater said no.

"They have a strong force," he remarked; "and it will not be wise to do anything reckless. We will have to be careful."

"Oh, we can give them a volley and get away before they can do us any damage, Dick."

"Perhaps so; but I am not sure of it, however. I doubt if we could get within musket-shot distance again without being seen."

"I am sure that we could."

"Nevertheless, we will remain on the defensive, and our main business will be to keep out of harm's way," said Dick; "of course, if the opportunity presents itself, and I see that we will be able to strike them a blow with safety to ourselves, I shall not hesitate to do it."

They waited at a safe distance, and the scouts left behind by Dick kept a sharp watch on the redcoats.

Presently one of the scouts came to Dick.

"They are coming this way," he said.

"Then we had better retire," said Dick. "This is not a good place to make a stand."

So the Liberty Boys, accompanied by the awkward squad, moved back till they came to where they had taken their horses. This was on the top of a hill, and it was such a strong position that Dick decided to make a stand there, if the British kept on coming.

One after another the scouts came in, each reporting that the British were advancing, and Dick gave the order for the Liberty Boys to get ready to offer battle.

Closer and closer came the redcoats.

When they were just out of musket-shot distance of the hilltop they paused, and some scouts were sent ahead to reconnoiter.

Of course these scouts were not long in learning that the patriots were on the hilltop.

They hastened back with the information.

"So that is where they are, eh?" exclaimed the British commander.

"Yes."

"Very good; we will proceed to surround the hilltop, and then we will have the rebels at our mercy."

He gave the order and the redcoats began making this movement. Dick knew what the enemy was doing, and was tempted to mount and retreat; but decided to stand his ground finally.

He stationed the Liberty Boys in a circle, cautioning them to be sure and take good aim before firing.

"That is what counts," he said. "It is not the number of shots that are fired, but the number of shots that are made to do execution."

"You may depend upon us, Dick," said Bob Estabrook.

The members of the awkward squad were distributed around the circle, one being sandwiched in between two of the Liberty Boys at different points in the circle.

As may well be supposed, the new recruits were somewhat nervous and excited.

Dick saw this and cautioned them to keep cool and take things easy.

"There is no use getting excited," he said. "We have the advantage of position, and I think that we shall be able to drive the redcoats back. Take careful aim, and make every shot tell."

Dick's words did a good deal toward calming the new recruits and making them take the matter coolly.

Even when the enemy appeared in sight the awkward squad did not show signs of trepidation.

They had a great deal of confidence in Dick, and believed

that what he said was the truth, that they would be able to drive the British back.

Closer and closer came the British.

They had been taught caution, and when they were getting well within musket-shot distance they took advantage of every tree and clump of shrubs and hid behind them.

They now opened fire.

The Liberty Boys returned the fire promptly.

For fifteen or twenty minutes there was a lively exchange of shots.

Not much damage was done on either side.

The firing became less brisk and then ceased.

The British had discovered that they were not doing any damage to speak of, and the Liberty Boys were willing to wait for a better opportunity to inflict injury.

"I hope they will charge on us," said Bob Estabrook.

"They may decide to do so," said Dick.

"If they do we will thin them out a bit."

"Yes, so we will."

The youths watched the enemy closely, wondering what it would do next.

Presently they saw a soldier advancing bearing a flag of truce.

"Bah!" exclaimed Bob, in disgust; "here comes a fellow to ask us to surrender."

Dick smiled.

"I judge that is the case," he said.

"I wonder what kind of chaps he thinks we are?"

"Well, you see they have us surrounded, and a great many people might think we were in a position where we would consider surrendering."

"They ought to know that we would not have permitted ourselves to be surrounded unless we were confident that we would be able to take care of ourselves."

"True; but the British—some of them, at least—think that rebels don't know much about warfare, you know, and that they are likely to do foolish things."

The bearer of the flag of truce was now close at hand, and Dick stepped forth and faced the fellow.

"What do you want?" he asked.

The British soldier paused and looked at Dick inquiringly.

"Are you the commander of the rebel force?" he asked.

"No," was the reply.

"Then send him out; I wish to see the commander."

"There is no rebel force here."

The redcoat muttered something, and then said:

"What do you call yourselves, if not rebels?"

"Patriots."

"Bah! It's all the same."

"Oh, no; there is a vast difference."

"I don't see it that way, but never mind. I did not come here to argue that question. Are you the commander of the force?"

"I am."

"Very good; Colonel Woods presents his compliments and asks that you surrender."

"Please present my compliments to Colonel Woods and tell him that I cannot for one moment consider the matter of surrendering."

The soldier looked surprised and disappointed.

"But we have you surrounded," he said.

"I know that; I permitted it in the first place. You may be sure that you could not have surrounded us had we not been willing to let you do so."

The messenger looked as though he doubted this, and then he said:

"That may or may not be the truth; anyway, we have you surrounded, and you cannot escape, so the only sensible thing to do is to surrender."

"That would be the most foolish thing we could do, for we are fully capable of holding our own here, and we purpose doing so."

"Perhaps you may be able to do so, so far as actual fighting is concerned; but we will lay siege and starve you out. You have not rations to sustain you long, nor can you get water to drink."

Dick smiled.

"When we want food or drink, rest assured that we will find a way to get it," he said.

The redcoat looked at Dick doubtfully; it was evident that he did not know what to think. The Liberty Boy's coolness and calmness puzzled him.

"You will be foolish if you try to hold out against us," the redcoat said, slowly and impressively; "we have three or four times as many men as you have, and the outcome is sure. After we have killed a number of your men you will be forced to surrender."

"I don't think so."

"Then you refuse?"

"I do."

The messenger hesitated, looked at Dick searchingly for a few moments and then turned and strode away.

When he got back to where the commanding officer stood he reported the result of the interview.

"So he refuses to surrender, does he?" remarked Colonel Woods.

"Yes, sir."

"He is very foolish."

"So I told him; but it had no effect."

"We can easily starve them into surrendering and would not lose a man."

"So I told him."

"What did he say?"

"That we could not do so."

"Humph! He must be a fool."

"He said that we could not have surrounded them had they not been willing to be surrounded, sir; and it would seem that there may be some truth in that statement. Such being the case, it is possible that they have something back of them that we know nothing about."

The colonel knit his brows.

"Yes, that may be possible," he acknowledged; "but I don't know what it could be."

"Nor I."

After some further conversation with the messenger the colonel gave the order to renew the firing.

This was done, but as had been the case before, it did not amount to anything. It was a waste of ammunition, for the Liberty Boys were so well protected that they did not sustain any injury to speak of. They returned the fire in a desultory manner. They were careful to wait till they saw some one to aim at, and by so doing they managed to wound several of the redcoats.

Thus the day wore slowly away.

The British made several attempts at doing the Liberty Boys damage during the day, but did not succeed, and when evening came the situation remained unchanged.

The Liberty Boys had food and water enough to last them all day, and so they got along very well; but they would not have any for use on the morrow, and it would be necessary to make their escape during the night if possible.

Dick felt that there was danger that the enemy might slip up under cover of the darkness and make a sudden rush and overwhelm his Liberty Boys, and so he discussed the matter with Bob and a few more of the youths.

It was decided that the best thing to do was to mount their horses and make a sudden dash through the British lines, and this was decided upon.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKING IN THE NEW RECRUITS.

Joe Skupp had listened to the conversation, but had not said anything. He waited until the decision had been made, and then he said to Dick:

"I have er suggestion ter make, Dick."

"What is it, Joe?" was the query.

"W'y et's this: Thet we take four er five uv ther hosses an' start 'em down ther hill toward ther south; ther red-coats will think et is us comin' an' their attention will be drawn in that direction. Then we kin mount an' ride away in the other direction, an' will be more likely ter git erway without being damaged, I think."

"I believe you are right, Joe; that is a good plan, and we will put it in practice."

"What will the fellows do whose horses are turned loose; Dick?" asked Bob.

"They will ride with some of us. We have a number of strong horses that will be able to carry a double load and yet get along at a lively rate of speed."

The work of putting Joe's suggestion into effect was begun at once.

The horses that were to be turned loose and driven away—six in number—were led to the road, headed toward the south, and at the signal from Dick were driven away, they being given sharp cuts with whips.

Away the horses went on a gallop, and the Liberty Boys promptly leaped into the saddle and sat there, awaiting the command from Dick to make a dash in the other direction.

Yells came from the direction from which the horses had gone, and then shots were fired.

It was time for the youths to move.

Dick realized this and gave the command:

"Forward!"

The youths urged their horses forward at a gallop. Down the road they dashed.

It was not a moonlight night, but it was clear, the stars shining, and the horses could be trusted to stay in the road.

Suddenly there sounded a musket-shot from in front of the Liberty Boys.

A sentinel had fired at them.

This was the signal for the Liberty Boys to open fire, and they did so, using their pistols.

The British were confused by the tactics of the youths, and this aided them in getting away without them being damaged materially.

Several of the youths were slightly wounded, but none so seriously as to make them unable to retain their seats on the backs of the horses.

They went through the lines of the British like a thunderbolt and were away in a hurry, leaving the enemy puzzled regarding what had happened, for most of the British had followed the riderless horses, thinking the Liberty Boys were on them, escaping.

The Liberty Boys continued on a mile or so, and then came to a stop.

Dick summoned Joe Skupp and asked him if there was a good camping place anywhere near.

Joe said there was, and offered to guide the youths to it. "Go ahead," said Dick.

Joe rode in front, the others following, and a few minutes later they came to an open space in the timber, and Dick saw at once that it was a very good place for an encampment.

He gave the order for the youths to dismount, and they did so.

Then they went into camp, and sentinels were stationed.

"Do you think the redcoats will follow us to-night?" asked Mark Morrison.

"I don't think so," was Dick's reply.

He was right in thinking thus.

The British did not put in an appearance; in fact, they remained where they were and tried to console themselves for the escape of the rebels by the thought that they would capture them in the morning.

They did not get to do this, or attempt it, even, for it became necessary for them to look out for their own safety. General Lafayette had been over toward the north and east, and he came along with his army shortly after sunrise, and the Liberty Boys joined his force and all went along together.

The British force discovered that an army was coming, and hastily broke camp and retreated toward Richmond.

General Lafayette was simply looking for a good place to go into camp with his army, however, so did not follow the British.

He did not want to get too near the city.

A good place was found only a mile from the home of Annie Stokes, and the patriot army went into camp. The Liberty Boys decided to remain with the army awhile, and this pleased Joe Skupp, for he would be near his sweetheart and might get a chance to go and see her once in awhile.

"How do you boys like being soldiers?" asked Dick, when they had got settled down in their new camp.

"I like et fine," said Joe.

The others all said the same.

About the middle of the forenoon five country boys put in an appearance, and when challenged by one of the sentinels they said they wanted to become members of Dick Slater's company of Liberty Boys.

"Oh, you do, eh?" remarked the sentinel.

"Yas," was the reply. "Some uv ther boys from our neighborhood have alreddy jined, an' we wanter jine, too."

"All right; you'll find the Liberty Boys over there," and the sentinel pointed to the spot where the youths had taken up their quarters.

The five country boys made their way over to the place indicated, and when they saw Joe Skupp and his eleven companions, all of whom they knew, they were delighted, and grinned all over their faces, so to speak.

"Hello, Joe," said the one who had acted as spokesman for the five.

"Hello, Tom; what ye doin' here?"

"We wanter jine ther Liberty Boys, ther same ez ye fellers hev, Joe."

"Oh, that's et, hey?"

"Yas."

"Well, I guess ye kin do et."

He turned to Dick with an inquiring look on his face.

The Liberty Boy nodded.

"I shall be very glad to have you join us," he said, turning to the youth who had been addressed as Tom. "We mill make you members of the awkward squad first. You will have to be drilled some, you know."

"Oh, yas, we know that."

"Better get them started drilling at once, Dick," said Bob. There was nothing else on the tapis just then, and Bob was ready to be entertained by the awkward maneuvers of the awkward squad.

Dick smiled and said that he judged it would be a very good plan to do so. Then he ordered the awkward squad to get ready to practice.

They obeyed, and the five new recruits were given muskets and told to take their places alongside of their friends.

They did so, and then Dick took the awkward squad in hand and began the work of drilling it.

The spectacle was even more comical than had been the case when Dick was drilling the others, for they knew a little something about it, and the five did not, and they got tangled up worse than would have been the case had all been equally ignorant.

It was fun for the Liberty Boys, for a great crowd had quickly gathered, eager to see the sport.

All kinds of remarks were indulged in.

The regular soldiers spoke freely, and the criticisms they made regarding the work of the awkward squad was something worth listening to.

The youths took it all good-naturedly, however. They were smart enough to know that it would do no good to get angry.

Some persons in Dick's place would have been bothered, and could not have gone ahead with the work of drilling the new recruits; but he was a cool, common-sense youth, with a philosophical turn of mind, and he did not mind it. The chaffing and joking did not bother him.

He worked with the youths an hour or more, breaking them in, and then desisted.

The new recruits were willing to stop, for it would put a stop to the chaffing, and then, too, they were tired and ready to rest.

"Well, Dick, you have a task in breaking in those new recruits," said a captain, who had been watching the scene.

"Yes," with a smile; "but they will make good soldiers, and I am willing to work hard in order to make them of value to the great cause."

"That is the way to look at the matter, I suppose; but it is hard on you."

"Oh, not so very. I can stand it."

Then Dick told the officer about the new recruits, and how they had already done good work and had been with them only a few days.

"They are all right," he said; "and the five that just came in this morning will no doubt turn out to be just as good soldiers as the others."

"No doubt of it. But are you going to go ahead and make a martyr of yourself by breaking in all the new recruits that may come?"

"Yes, indeed; I would be glad to help the great cause along in any way, and this one, of drilling an awkward squad, is one of the best ways, I feel sure."

"Yes; that is the way to turn out soldiers."

The sport being ended, the regular soldiers strolled back to their respective quarters, leaving the Liberty Boys and the new recruits to themselves.

"Whut made ye come heer?" Joe Skupp asked of the youth he had called Tom. Fenton was the youth's last name.

"W'y we boys heerd that ye hed jined ther Liberty Boys," was the reply; "an' so we thort we'd do ther same."

"Waal, I guess ye done erbout ther right thing, Tom."

"I think so, myse'f."

"You think you will like to be a soldier?" asked Dick.

"Yas."

"Yah, you vill lige dot, you pet me," said Carl Gooken-spieler, the Dutch Liberty Boy.

"Yis, av yez loike to foight yez wull loike to be a soldier," said Patsy Brannigan.

"Oh, you mustn't think that everybody likes to fight as well as you do, Patsy," said Mark Morrison.

"I'm the only one of all the Liberty Boys who can hold my own with Patsy when it comes to enjoying a fight," said Bob Estabrook, with a grin; "we are fighters by nature."

The other youths laughed. This was so nearly the truth that they did not offer to dispute it.

General Lafayette sent an orderly to tell Dick Slater to come to his tent, and the orderly appeared at this moment, and Dick rose and made his way to the headquarter's tent.

He saluted on entering, and took a seat on the camp-stool that the general pointed to.

"I wish to ask a few questions, Dick," said the officer.

"I shall be very glad to answer them, sir," was the reply.

"Very good."

The general asked a number of questions. He wished to know whether Dick knew the strength of the British force in Richmond, and whether the youths had heard any news regarding the whereabouts of Cornwallis and his army.

Dick could not answer either of these questions, so General Lafayette was no wiser than before.

"I am eager to learn the strength of the force in Richmond," he said; "and if I can learn that, then I wish to learn the whereabouts of General Cornwallis and his army. If he is a good distance away, and if the force is not too strong in Richmond, then I might make an attack and capture the city."

Dick's face lighted up, and he looked at the officer eagerly.

"I might be able to secure the information for you, General Lafayette," he said.

"Do you think so, Dick?"

"Yes; I am willing to make the attempt, at any rate."

"Good! I shall be glad to have you try it; and I feel sure that if any one can succeed it is you."

"Thank you, sir; I will do my best."

"I suppose you will go about the work at the earliest possible moment, Dick?"

"Yes, sir; this very evening."

"Good; and report it to me as soon as you get back."

"I will do so, sir."

CHAPTER VII.

A FOOLED REDCOAT.

As Dick walked back to the quarters occupied by the Liberty Boys he was turning over in his mind various

plans for getting into the city of Richmond without being suspected of being a spy.

He thought of several plans, but none of them suited him.

He answered the questions put to him by the Liberty Boys; but he spoke in an absent-minded manner, and Bob noticed this, and said:

"What are you thinking about, anyway, old man?"

Dick told him.

"I'll tell you what you do," said Bob, after thinking a few moments; "borrow a dress somewhere and go as a girl."

Dick's face brightened, and he looked interested.

"That should be a good plan," he said; "but I don't know where I could borrow the dress."

"Ask Joe Skupp; he knows everybody living anywhere around here and will be able to tell you where you can find a dress that will fit you."

"That's a good idea. I'll ask him."

Dick did ask Joe, and the youth sized Dick up carefully, and then said:

"I know where we will go—over to my home. Mother's dress will fit ye, I'm sartin."

"All right; we will go right over there. How far is it?"

"A mile."

"Toward Richmond?"

"Yas."

"Then I will go with the expectation of going right on to the city."

He told Bob that he should have charge of the Liberty Boys while he (Dick) was away, and then Joe Skupp and the famous young scout and spy took their departure.

Fifteen minutes later they arrived at Joe's home. The youth introduced Dick to Mr. and Mrs. Skupp, and then explained what his young commander wanted.

Mrs. Skupp laughed good-naturedly and said Dick was welcome to one of her dresses. He thanked her, and then all four entered the house—they had been out on the porch—and the good woman brought out a dress, a neck-shawl and a bonnet and told Dick to go into Joe's bedroom and try them on.

He did so, and found that they fitted him very well.

When he came out of the bedroom the three uttered exclamations.

"Ther dress fits ye, all right."

"Ye are good-lookin' enough ter pass yerself off as a gal."

"Take care that some of ther soldiers don't try ter make love ter ye!"

Dick laughed.

"I guess that there is no danger of that," he said; "and if any should I will show them that I have rather a heavy hand for a girl."

Joe laughed.

"I'd like ter be erlong an' see yer knock er redcoat down," he said; "I guess et'd astonish him some."

"Now, may I borrow a horse and a basketful of eggs."

butter, or something of that kind, so that I may pass myself off as having come to market?" Dick asked.

"Yes, we hev er horse that ye kin ride," replied Mr. Skupp.

"That will do nicely," said Dick.

Mrs. Skupp got the butter ready, and fifteen minutes later Dick, sitting sidewise on the blanket strapped on Dobbin's back, rode away in the direction of Richmond.

To tell the truth, he made a very good looking girl, of the buxom type. His face was browned, of course, but it was quite a common thing for girls to be as sunburned as their brothers in those days.

As a boy at home, when working on the farm, Dick had often practiced riding sideways, just for the novelty of the thing, and this stood him in good stead now. He had no difficulty in staying on the horse's back.

Of course he did not ride fast, for he had to carry the basketful of butter; and there was no need of riding fast, for he had practically the entire afternoon before him, with only a trip of five miles ahead.

He met a few people as he rode along, and one and all spoke to him pleasantly, and it was plain that not one suspected that the buxom looking lassie was in truth an exceedingly lively and muscular young man.

Dick enjoyed the experience. He was young and full of life, and he liked anything that was out of the ordinary, as was the case now when he was masquerading as a girl.

He was not handicapped greatly, either, if he should get into trouble, for in the bosom of his dress nestled two pistols.

On he rode.

At last the city came in sight, and the youth breathed a sigh of satisfaction.

"There is my destination," he said to himself; "I am glad that I am getting to the end of my journey, for I am eager to see whether the redcoats will suspect that I am other than what I seem."

On he rode.

Closer and closer to the suburbs of the city he drew, and at last he reached the point where the country road ended and the street of the city began.

A sentinel was stationed here, and he hailed Dick and asked him who he was and where he was going.

"My name is Sally Slade," was Dick's reply; "an' I am goin' inter ther city ter sell some butter an' buy some things at ther stores."

"All right; ride on, Sally," said the sentinel.

"Thank ye, mister."

Then Dick gave the sentinel what he intended to be a bewitching smile and rode on.

"I tell you, this girl disguise is a good thing," he said to himself; "I don't believe I am going to have a bit of trouble."

He rode up the street and at last arrived in the heart of the city.

He dismounted in front of a grocery store and tied his horse to a hitching-rack.

Then he walked into the store, with the basket on his arm.

One of the clerks came forward to wait on the supposed girl, and Dick handed the youth the basket, with the statement that it contained eighteen pounds of "ez good butter ez ennybuddy need ever wanter taste."

The clerk smiled and then weighed the butter, after which he paid Dick the money due him.

"Is there anything you wish to-day?" he asked.

Mrs. Skupp had given Dick a list of articles that she wanted, and he handed the clerk the list.

"All right; I'll put the things up at once," said the youth; "I suppose you wish them placed in the basket?" "Ef ye please, mister."

It did not take the clerk long to attend to this work, and then Dick took the basket on his arm and walked out.

He wished to spend an hour or two on the streets, and by pretending to be doing some shopping at the various stores this would be an easy matter, he was sure.

He moved slowly, pausing to look in at the shop windows, as a girl might be expected to do, and so he did not attract much attention. Those who did notice him supposed that he was what he seemed to be, a simple country girl.

The seeming country girl was very wideawake, however; he had his eyes and ears open, and he was listening to every bit of conversation that was carried on in his vicinity.

He hoped to be able to hear something sooner or later that would be of benefit to him; something that would help the patriots, through giving them advance knowledge of what the enemy was intending to do.

He was standing looking into the window of a dry goods store when a girl of about seventeen years of age paused and stood beside him, she also being interested by the display of goods in the window.

Here was an opportunity, and Dick decided to improve it.

"Do yer live in ther city?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply, with a quick, comprehensive glance at Dick, whom, of course, she supposed to be a girl.

"I live in ther country."

"Do you?" with a quick smile. "Really, I would not have known it had you not told me."

Here was feminine irony, and Dick laughed to himself, but he was playing a part, and he did not for one moment lose sight of the fact that he was supposed to be a country girl; so he said, as though well pleased by what the other had remarked:

"Is that so, now, really?"

"Oh, yes."

There was a few moments of silence, and then Dick said:

"I s'pose ye see lots uv sojers every day?"

"Oh, yes; quite a good many."

"There mus' be lots of 'em in ther city, hain't there?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I wonder how many?"

"Oh, I should say four thousand, at least."

"That is er good many."

"Yes."

"Hain't ther gin'ral's name Cornwallis?"

"No; the general in command here is named Arnold."

"Is that so? I thought I heard somebuddy say that Cornwallis wuz comin'."

"He may be, but he hasn't got here yet."

Then with a nod and a smile the girl turned and walked away.

Dick looked into the window a few moments longer, and then walked on down the street. He was feeling pretty well satisfied, for he had secured some information that he considered to be of value.

He had learned how many soldiers there were in Richmond, and he had learned, also, that Cornwallis and his army had not yet arrived.

He was not ready to go, however. He thought it possible that he might be able to learn something more that would be of interest to General Lafayette.

He walked on down the street and presently met four British soldiers, all of whom had been drinking. They were boisterous, and were taking up more of the sidewalk than they had a right to.

They paused in front of Dick, and one leered and said: "Hello, my pretty maiden! Give me a kiss."

"Please don't bother me," said Dick, acting as he thought a girl would have acted under similar circumstances; "I—I want ter—ter go on up ther street."

"You may do so just as soon as you have given me the kiss."

"I haven't enny kisses ter give, Mister; let me pass."

"I can't do it; I must have a kiss, and if you haven't any to give I shall have to take one."

He advanced a couple of steps as he spoke, and Dick took a step backward and motioned the redcoat away.

"Ye mustn't bother me," he said; "I've got er feller up in ther country, an' he wouldn't like fur me ter kiss enny-buddy."

"Oh, ho! That makes it more interesting. I am going to have a kiss, just the same."

He took another step forward, his comrades applauding him and urging him on, but Dick retreated a couple of paces, and said:

"Keep erway frum me. I won't let ye kiss me."

"How are you going to help yourself?" with a sneering laugh. "You will have to let me kiss you, and you might as well make up your mind to that."

"But I won't have ter do ennythin' uv ther kin'. Go 'way an' let me erlone."

For answer the redcoat leaped forward and attempted to throw his arm around Dick's waist.

Then he was given a surprise.

Out shot Dick's fist, and it landed fair and square be-

tween the soldier's eyes, knocking him down, kerthump, on the sidewalk.

Exclamations of amazement and wonder escaped the lips of the other three redcoats.

A number of people who were near and who had seen the affair gathered around the little group, and all made remarks, most of which were rather more complimentary to the supposed girl than to the redcoat.

"He got what he deserved."

"Yes, so he did."

"The girl is a hard hitter."

"Yes; and I am glad she is."

"Perhaps the fellow will behave himself in the future." Such were a few of the remarks made by the spectators.

As for the redcoat who had met with such an ignominious disaster, he hardly knew what to think. He lay there blinking up at the sky a few moments, and then rose to a sitting posture and rubbed his face where the blow had landed.

"Doesn't feel very good, eh?" from one of the spectators, in a sarcastic voice.

"It is swelling up nicely," from another.

The redcoat's face grew red with anger and discomfiture. He realized that he had been knocked down by a girl, and the realization was anything but pleasing.

He scrambled hastily to his feet and glared at the grinning spectators.

"What you laughing at?" he growled.

"I guess they are laughing at you, Harley," said one of his comrades; even if they had laughed. The spectacle of their companion going down under a blow from the fist of a girl was too much for their risibles.

"Well, they had better stop it!" in a growling voice.

"I don't see how you are going to make them stop it!" from one of his companions.

"Why not go ahead now and get the kiss?" asked another.

"He had better not try it," said Dick; "I'll knock 'im down erg'in ef he does."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed one of the three soldiers; "how do you like that, Harley?"

"I'd rather slap the hussy's face than to kiss her," growled Harley; "and I've a good mind to it, too."

"Ye hedn't better try it," retorted Dick.

This made the fellow very angry, and he took a quick step forward and struck at the youth with the flat of his hand. His intention was to slap the supposed girl's face; but Dick dodged back, and the soldier's hand struck the bonnet, knocking it off the youth's head.

The spectators saw instantly that the bonnet had hidden the short hair of a rather good looking young man, and exclamations of surprise went up.

The redcoats stared in open-mouthed amazement, also, and then the fellow who had caused all the trouble cried out:

"It's a man, fellows! It's a rebel spy, I'll wager a hundred pounds!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A CLEVER RUSE.

It was an unfortunate affair.

Dick realized that he was in a bad predicament.

Here he was in the heart of the city, surrounded by a crowd, and the fact that he was a spy—or at least that he was sailing under false colors—was known.

What should he do?

There was no time for deliberation. Whatever he did must be done quickly.

He dropped his basket.

Instantly he decided to make an attempt to escape.

As the first move he struck out straight from the shoulder, and his fist struck the redcoat who had denounced him fair between the eyes, knocking him down.

Then Dick whirled and ran in the opposite direction.

His quick eyes had noted that the crowd in that direction was thinner than at the other point, and by striking out lustily he managed to force his way through, and went running up the street at the top of his speed.

The crowd raced after him, telling him to stop; but of course he did not do so.

The spectacle of a supposed girl running along, pursued by a crowd of citizens and soldiers was such an unusual one that it could not but attract attention, and the crowd grew in size quite rapidly.

Dick was a fast runner, however, and would have distanced his pursuers had he not suddenly found himself confronted by at least a score of British soldiers, who spread out across the street and effectually blocked the way.

Here was a predicament indeed.

Dick began to think that he was doomed to be captured.

He could not go on, and he could not turn back.

Near at hand was an areaway, and Dick noted that the door leading into the basement was ajar.

Without stopping to give the matter any consideration he leaped over the iron railing down into the areaway.

It was a drop of ten or a dozen feet, but Dick did not mind that.

As he took the leap the soldiers and citizens gave utterance to cries and exclamations.

"What a daring fellow!"

"He'll be killed!"

"Don't let him escape!"

"We've got him now!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

Then all that could get near the areaway crowded around it and looked down, expecting to see the supposed spy.

They were disappointed. He was not in sight.

"He has gone through the doorway," cried one of the redcoats. "We must follow."

He climbed over the railing and leaped down into the

areaway. Five or six more of the soldiers did the same, and they hastened through the doorway into the basement.

They found themselves in a long hallway, which extended back toward the rear.

Candles were burning in the hallway, and the redcoats could see the entire length of it. To their surprise the fugitive was not in sight.

There were several doors opening off the hall, however, and it was probable that the supposed spy had entered one of the rooms into which these doors opened.

The redcoats opened the doors, and as they came to them, looked in the rooms. They looked in every room—and entered and searched the rooms, indeed—and the fugitive was not to be found.

They stood in a group in the hall and looked at one another inquiringly.

"Where has he gone?" asked one.

"He must have gone up on the first floor of the house," said another.

"Let's go up there and search for him."

"All right; come along."

The stairs were near at hand, and they ascended them.

When they tried the door at the top of the stairs they found it fastened.

This did not stop them, however; two of the redcoats placed their shoulders against the door and burst it open.

Then they passed through and found themselves in a wide, long hall, from which a stairway led to the second floor.

Here they were met by an excited servant, who asked them what they wanted.

"Never mind," replied the leader of the searching party; "we know what we want."

"You are robbers!" the servant gasped.

The redcoat pointed to his uniform.

"See that?" he remarked; "we are soldiers, and we have reason to believe that a rebel spy is in the house; so we are searching for him."

"There isn't any spy in here, sir."

"He may be here and you not know it."

"I don't think that possible."

"We do; we were chasing a spy and he leaped down in your areaway and entered the basement. We have searched the basement rooms thoroughly and failed to find him; so he must have come up here."

"Who are these men, Jennings?" called a sweet voice from the head of the stairs, and the redcoats looked up, to see a beautiful girl of perhaps seventeen or eighteen years standing there.

"They are soldiers, Miss Alice, and they say they are looking for a rebel spy who got in the basement."

"A rebel spy!"

"Yes, Miss Alice. He got into the basement, but they failed to find him there, and they think he may have come up here and hidden himself."

"Oh, that is it? Well, let the gentlemen look wherever they wish to. Help them all you can, Jennings. If there is a rebel spy in our house we want that he shall be found and taken away."

"Yes, Miss Alice; I will do as you say."

Then the girl turned and walked away, and the soldiers proceeded to look all around the rooms on the ground floor. The servant assisted them materially, for he knew just the places to look, if, as the redcoats insisted, there was a man hidden in the house.

No signs of the spy were found on the ground floor, however, and the redcoats looked disappointed.

"He must have gone upstairs," said one.

"Likely enough," from another.

"Well, Jennings," said the leader, "I hate to discommodo you, but I really think that we must go upstairs and finish the work of searching for the spy. He is certainly in the house somewhere."

"I don't believe he is; but of course you will look for him if you wish to do so."

"We are going to do so; we will be thorough while we are at it."

The servant led the way upstairs, and the young lady appeared again and said:

"You wish to search the rooms on this floor, gentlemen?"

"Yes, miss," was the reply; "and the attic rooms, if he is not found on this floor. We are confident that he is in the house."

"Search the house from basement to garret, sir; you are welcome to do so; if the spy is here I hope you will find him."

So the redcoats searched all the rooms on that floor, after which they went up into the attic and searched there.

It was all to no avail. The spy was not to be found.

The redcoats were puzzled.

They had been confident that he was in the house; yet he was not to be found, and the only thing to do was to retire as gracefully as possible.

They went down to the second floor, apologized to the girl for bothering her, and then made their way downstairs, and were let out at the front door by Jennings, the servant.

As Jennings turned, after closing the door and fastening it, he found himself face to face with Miss Crowley, the young lady having come downstairs.

Both smiled, and Miss Alice said:

"You played the part of a servant quite as well as you did that of a young girl from the country, Captain Slater."

"Thank you for the compliment, Miss Crowley," said Dick, for he it was.

On passing through the doorway into the basement Dick had gone along the hallway and up the stairs leading to the first floor. The door at the top of the stairs was unfastened, and he had no trouble in opening it and passing through into the hall beyond. He knew he would be pursued, however, and so he fastened the door.

As he turned away from the door he found himself face to face with a very beautiful young lady, and he recognized her as being the one he had talked to on the street a short time before. She recognized him, also, as being the supposed girl who had asked her some questions, and an exclamation escaped her lips.

"You are not a girl; but a man!"

"You are right, miss," said Dick; "and I am being pursued. May I ask you if you will conceal me somewhere and thus save me from being captured?"

"Are you a patriot?" the girl asked, quickly and eagerly.

Dick leaped to the conclusion at once that the maiden was a patriot, and he asked her if such were not the case.

"Yes," was the reply; "and if you are a patriot spy I will save you from capture if it is possible to do so."

"Thank you; I am a patriot spy."

"What is your name?"

"Dick Slater."

"I have heard of you. You are the commander of a company of young men known as the Liberty Boys of '76, are you not?"

"Yes."

"My name is Alice Crowley; my parents are out for a drive, and I am here all alone, the other servants, two in number, having this afternoon out."

A thought struck Dick. Why might he not impersonate a servant and thus deceive the redcoats should they enter and search for him.

He suggested to the girl and she fell in with the idea at once.

"Our man, Jennings, is about your size," she said, "and some of his coats are in that closet yonder; put one on. I think you will find a wig or two there, also, and one of those will serve to disguise you."

"Very well, and thank you."

Dick went to the closet and found the coat and wig, and at this moment voices and footsteps were heard down in the basement.

The redcoats are already searching for me," said Dick.

"Yes; you will have to hurry. Go into any room on this floor and don the coat and wig. I will go upstairs. Remember your name is Jennings."

"I will remember," with a smile; "how can I ever thank you for what you are doing for me, Miss Crowley?"

"No thanks are necessary."

Dick entered the library and quickly doffed the dress. He had simply removed his coat when he donned the dress at the home of the Skupps, so now, when he donned the servant's coat, he was fully dressed, save for a hat, and in playing the part of a servant of the household he would not need a hat. He put the wig on, however, and it changed the looks of his face sufficiently so that any one who had seen his face when the bonnet was knocked off his head on the street would have been unable to see any likeness between the two faces. He hid the dress in a closet.

Dick looked at his reflection in a mirror and was satisfied that he need not fear recognition.

As we have seen, he was not recognized, even though one of the six who had searched the house was the fellow who had started all the trouble by trying to kiss him when he was dressed as a girl.

Now that the redcoats were gone and Dick was safe the girl drew a breath of relief.

"I am glad that they have gone away, Mr. Slater," she said; "and I am glad that you were successful in fooling them."

"So am I, Miss Crowley; but I am not yet out of the woods. It is going to be a very difficult matter for me to get out of the city in safety."

"I should think so; I suppose you will wait till night to make the attempt?"

"Yes; I will have to do so, for they will be on their guard, and a close watch will be kept for me."

"It will be dangerous even then, will it not?"

"Yes."

"Then I have a plan. When father and mother come back from their ride I will say that I wish to take a drive also, and you can go along. The soldiers know our carriage, and will not think of such a thing as challenging us."

"Thank you; that will be kind of you."

The girl's parents returned a few minutes later, and when they entered the house and saw another Jennings they looked surprised.

"Why, who is this, Alice?" exclaimed the girl's father.

The girl hastened to explain, and when they had heard all the two gave Dick a warm greeting.

"We are patriots," said Mr. Crowley; "though, as you may well understand, we do not say much about it while the redcoats are occupying the city."

"I suppose not," with a smile.

"No; Arnold would loot our house if he suspected that we were patriots."

"True; and he might throw you into prison."

"Yes; he is worse than any British officer. The fact that he was a traitor to the patriot cause seems to make him eager to do all the damage to patriots that he possibly can."

"He feels the disgrace, and tries to get rid of the feeling by acting cruelly to patriots."

"I judge that is it."

Then Alice told her parents her plan for enabling Dick to make his escape from the city.

"That is a good plan," Mr. Crowley said. "I think it will succeed."

"I am sure that it will, father," said Alice.

Then she hastened upstairs to get ready for her ride, while Mr. Crowley sent word to the coachman to bring the carriage back to the front of the house.

This was done, and when the girl came down dressed for the ride she went out and entered the carriage, while Dick took his place beside the driver.

Dick had thought of trying to get the horse he had ridden to the city, and which he had left hitched in front

of the grocery store; but he feared that the animal was being watched by the British, who would capture any one who came to get the horse; so he gave up the idea and decided that he would have to go back to Mr. Skupp's and report that the animal was lost.

"I will pay him for the horse," thought Dick.

The driver gave Dick some sidelong glances, but did not say anything. He was well-trained, and realized the fact that he had a companion on the seat was no affair of his. He was there to drive and not to be curious.

They rolled along the street and at last arrived at the edge of the city.

The sentinels stationed there did not halt the carriage. They knew whose it was, and permitted the driver to pass right along.

They little suspected that the rebel spy they had only a short time before received orders to be on the lookout for was seated beside the driver of the carriage, with his arms folded, looking as careless and unconcerned as could be, though he was on the anxious seat to some extent until after the sentinels had been left behind.

He felt that he was safe now, however, and when they had gone half a mile further he called down to Miss Crowley and said that he would not bother her any further, but would get down and walk.

"No; I will take you to your destination," was the reply; "I shall enjoy the ride."

So the carriage did not stop until the home of the Skupps was reached, and here Dick jumped down and thanked Miss Crowley for bringing him safely away from Richmond.

"You are more than welcome, Mr. Slater," the girl said. "I am only glad that I was in a position to do something to aid the great cause. If I ever get a chance to do more I shall gladly do it."

Then she shook hands with Dick, and he thanked her again for her kindness to him, and the next moment the carriage was rolling back in the direction of the city.

CHAPTER IX.

HUNTING REDCOATS.

Naturally the Skupps were surprised to see Dick come back in a carriage.

It happened that Joe was there, and he made inquiries regarding the meaning of it all.

"Did ther British fin' out ye wuz er spy?" he asked in conclusion.

"Yes," replied Dick; "and then he told the story of his adventures in the city."

"I am sorry that I lost your horse," he said in conclusion; "but I will pay you for him, Mr. Skupp."

"Ye'll do nuthin' uv ther kind, Dick," was the reply;

"ole Dobbin wuzn't worth much, anyhow, an' I don' want enny munny fur 'im."

Dick insisted, but it did no good. The man was firm. He would not accept anything for the loss of the horse.

"I lost the basket, its contents and your dress, Mrs. Skupp," he said; "I want to pay you for them."

But she would not listen to this.

Dick talked a few minutes longer and then said that he must be getting back to the patriot encampment.

"I'll go with ye," said Joe.

They set out, and a few minutes later arrived at the encampment.

Dick went to the tent occupied by General Lafayette.

"You were not away long, Dick," said the general.

"No, sir; I learned about all that it was possible to learn, and so came back as soon as I could."

"You bring some information, then, Dick?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you learn the number of soldiers there are in Richmond?"

"Yes; there are about four thousand."

"Is General Cornwallis there?"

"No, sir."

"Is he expected soon?"

Dick shook his head.

"I was unable to learn whether or not they were expecting him soon, sir; but he certainly is expected there."

General Lafayette hardly knew what to do.

He had only three thousand men, and a great many of these were militia. If he were to attack Richmond he could hardly hope to be successful.

Still, he thought that it would be best to hold a council and get the views of the officers of his staff, and he told his orderly to summon the officers.

The orderly did so, and when they appeared Lafayette laid the matter before them.

They listened to his statement, and then a discussion ensued.

Should they attack Richmond.

That was the question, and it was discussed earnestly.

It was decided, finally, that it would be unwise to make the attack.

"We are not strong enough to make a success of it," said Lafayette; "and a failure will be a bad thing for us."

"Yes; it would be worse for us than for the British," said one of the officers.

"I judge that the best we can do for the present," said Lafayette, "is to go ahead and keep watch of Arnold and spoil his plans whenever possible."

"Yes," said another of the officers; "if we can hold him in check we will be doing something."

Presently the council broke up and the officers dispersed to the different parts of the encampment, where their companies or forces were quartered.

It was supper time, and the Liberty Boys were cooking their suppers when Dick got to where they were stationed.

Joe Skupp had given the youths the story of Dick's trip

to and adventures in Richmond; but the Liberty Boys were eager to hear the details. They questioned their commander eagerly.

"I'm hungry, boys; wait till after supper and I'll tell you the story," he said.

This was satisfactory, and after supper had been eaten Dick told the story in detail.

The Liberty Boys listened with interest.

They thought that Dick had been very fortunate in making the acquaintance of Alice Crowley.

"Say, she must be a fine girl," said George Fenner.

"So she is," from Dick.

Then he told the youths what the general had decided upon.

The Liberty Boys were sorry that the attack was not to be made on Richmond.

They were always eager to fight, and preferred to do so, even though they were sure that they could not win in the end.

"Oh, we will have something to do," said Dick. "Arnold will keep on burning and pillaging patriot homes, and we will keep watching for the marauding bands, and will strike them a blow at every opportunity."

"That will be better than to simply sit here in camp and do nothing," said Bob Estabrook.

There was nothing to do that night, so they lay down and got a good night's sleep.

Next morning after they had breakfasted Dick told the youths to get ready for a trip.

"The redcoats have been doing considerable work to the southward from Richmond," he said; "and it is my intention that we shall ride around the city and try to get a chance at one or more of the marauding bands."

This suited the Liberty Boys.

"That is the very thing I would have suggested, Dick," said Bob.

"Yah, I haf peen t'inkin' abouid dot, mineselluf, und dot is so," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Yis yez have, Oi am not t'inkin'," said Patsy Branigan, in supreme scorn; "yez niver t'ought av such a t'ing, an' it's mesilf would wager innythin' thot thot is dhe thruth, begorra."

"Vat do you know abouid vat I haf peen t'inkin', Batsy Prannigan?" said Carl; "you vos know noddings abouid dot."

"Oh, g'wan wid yez, Cookyspiller; sthop talkin' an' go to getthin' riddy to go on dhe thrip, or its yersilf wull ghet lift, I dunno."

"I vill pe retty ven der rest vos peen retty."

Dick told the members of the awkward squad to get ready also.

"You may go with us," he said; "you have your horses here and know how to ride and shoot, and that is the main thing."

"Thank ye, Dick," said Joe Skupp, eagerly.

The new recruits were delighted.

They hastened to bridle and saddle their horses, and when

the party of Liberty Boys rode away the awkward squad went with them.

As they rode away they were followed by the cheers of scores of the regular soldiers.

The regular soldiers liked the Liberty Boys on account of the dashing style of the youths when on the battlefield. The Liberty Boys were brave to recklessness, and their example was worth a great deal in a battle. Bravery inspires bravery and the other soldiers always fought better when the Liberty Boys were in the battle.

The youths waved their hats when they arrived at a bend in the road, and then rode around the bend and disappeared from the view of the soldiers in the encampment.

In reaching their intended destination the Liberty Boys would have to make a half circuit and travel a distance of perhaps fifteen miles, and so they rode at a lively pace, for Dick was eager to get on the ground ahead of any of the marauding bands if possible.

They rode southward two miles and then turned toward the rest and rode in that direction about three miles. Then they again turned toward the south and continued in this direction until they had gone about seven miles. The next turn was toward the east, and they rode about three miles and came to a halt.

"How far are we from Richmond, Dick?" asked Bob.

"About five miles, Bob."

"I wonder if this is the main road that leads southward from Richmond to Petersburg?"

"I cannot say, Bob; likely it is, however."

The youths remained where they were until noon, and not a sign of redcoats did they see.

"We will eat dinner," said Dick; "and then we will divide our force and begin scouring the country round about us. Perhaps we may run across one or two of the foraging bands."

"That is a good scheme," said Bob Estabrook.

When they had eaten dinner the party was divided, and Bob was placed in command of one, while Dick had charge of the other.

Dick kept the awkward squad with his party, as he wished to have personal supervision over them in their first engagement with the enemy.

"Where shall we meet after we have finished the work for the afternoon?" asked Bob, as they were preparing to start.

"Right here," replied Dick. "I have made up my mind that we will go into camp here to-night, and will put in the day in this part of the country to-morrow."

"All right; we will come back here. About what time shall we aim to get here?"

"Oh, about six o'clock."

"Very well."

Then Bob and his part of the force rode away, and shortly afterward Dick and his force followed. At a cross-road one mile to the southward one party turned toward the west and the other toward the east.

The two forces rode hither and thither all afternoon, but failed to run across a band of redcoats.

When the two forces arrived at the appointed rendezvous that evening they were a tired and somewhat disgusted looking lot of youths.

"Say, this has been a day of disappointment, Dick," said Bob, with a discontented scowl on his usually smiling face.

"Oh, well, perhaps we may have better luck next time, Bob," was Dick's reply.

"I hope so."

"I am sure that such will be the case. The redcoats did not happen to come in this direction to-day, which accounts for our lack of success in finding them; and it makes it all the more likely that they will come this way to-morrow."

"That's so."

"I hope we will get a chance at some redcoats to-morrow," said Sam Sanderson.

"Und I vos been hoping dot, mineselluf," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Yis, an' it's yersilf wull run loike dhe Ould Nick wur afther yez, av we should be afther matin' up wid inny av dhe ridcoats," said Patsy Brannigan.

"I vill nod do dot," said Carl; "I haf me nefer run vrom der retgoads, und I don'd vos been goin' to run vrom dem."

"Say to it that yez are not afther doin' it."

"I vill loog ouid vor mineselluf, Batsy Prannigan; und id vill pe ein goot t'ing if you vos loog ouid vor your selluf. You vill run shoost so quickness as vat I vill, und dot is der trut'."

"Oh, you will both run if you get half a chance," said Bob Estabrook; "shut up, or I'll give you both a thrashing."

The other Liberty Boys laughed and Patsy and Carl stopped quarreling and contented themselves with glaring at each other. The truth of the matter was that they were the best friends in the world, and although they quarreled frequently, they seldom or never came to blows. And if one got into trouble the other could be depended upon to back him up and lay down his life in his defense, if necessary.

Dick selected an open space in the edge of the timber near the road as a camping place, and the youths settled down to take things easy.

They brought out the cold bread and meat that was to constitute their supper, and proceeded to eat the frugal repast.

They were strong, healthy and hearty, however, and they ate the food with a relish, and seasoned it with lively talk and hearty laughter.

They were a jolly lot of youths, and the members of the awkward squad enjoyed listening to their comrades, and congratulated themselves again and again on having been permitted to become members of the company.

Patsy and Carl got to quarreling again, and in his

anger at something that Patsy said to him Carl choked on a piece of meat, and would no doubt have strangled to death had not Patsy laid the Dutch youth across his lap and pounded him on the back and shoulders with such good will that the piece of meat was loosened sufficiently so that Carl got it down by hard work.

Then, his friend being out of danger, Patsy rolled the fat Dutch youth off on to the ground, with the remark:

"Dhere! Choke agh'in, wull yez! Shure an' it served ye roight fur bein' such a glutton, Oi dunno!"

Carl rolled over and rose to a sitting posture. His eyes were still bulging out to an abnormal extent, but presently he got back to his normal condition, and then he said:

"Py shimminetty, I vos almosht shoked to deat', und dot is so."

"Yez would be dead this minnet, but for the heroic tratement that Oi administered to yez," said Patsy; "it's mesilf has saved yer loife, but Oi don't expect to receive inny thanks from yez."

"I vos peen much obligated to you, Batsy," said the Dutch youth, earnestly.

"Thot's all roight; yez don't owe me inny thanks. Av ye wur to dié, Cookyspiller, dhere wouldn't be inny wan to have fun wid, an' so yez see it wur silfishness on me own parrut that caused me to save your loife."

At this instant George Fenner leaped up and pointed up the road.

"A runaway!" he cried; "look! It is a carriage and there is no one save a woman in it! She will be killed if the horses are not stopped."

The youths looked up the road—it was not yet dark—and saw a team of horses coming down the road on the run.

They were attached to a carriage, and the driver had evidently been thrown from his seat, for there was no one in the carriage save the one woman; the lines were dragging underneath the feet of the frightened horses.

"I'll save her!" cried George Fenner, leaping up and dashing down toward the road; "I'll stop the team or die trying!"

CHAPTER X.

GEORGE FENNER'S BRAVE DEED.

The other Liberty Boys leaped to their feet and ran in the same direction; they were determined to aid George, if they could get there in time.

He had got the start of them, and the runaway team was so close at hand that it would be opposite the encampment in a few moments.

George, fast runner though he was, was only just in time to make a flying leap and catch hold of the lines near the bit in the mouth of the near horse.

So fast were the horses running and so strong were they that the brave Liberty Boy was jerked off his feet and through the air as though shot from a catapult. He was dragged at least twenty feet before his feet touched the ground again, and when he did touch the ground he rose with a springing motion and leaped astride the horse.

It was an agile feat, and the Liberty Boys gave utterance to wild cheers as they witnessed it.

"Wonderful!"

"Did you ever see the like of that?"

"That beats anything I ever saw."

"Yes, yes!"

Such were a few of the exclamations the youths gave utterance to, after they had given the cheers.

They did not reach the road until after the carriage had passed, of course, but they ran down the road in pursuit of it as rapidly as possible, for they wished to be on hand to render George assistance as soon as he got the horses partially under control.

Dick had recognized the inmate of the carriage at the first glance.

She was Alice Crowley, the girl who had saved him from capture the afternoon before in her home in Richmond, and who had given him a carriage ride out of the city and to the Skupp home.

Doubtless she had been out riding this afternoon and the horses had scared at something, the driver had fallen or been thrown off his seat, and then, the animals becoming more and more frightened, had run away.

"But George will stop the team and save the girl," said Dick to himself.

The brave Liberty Boy was hard at work pulling on the lines, and he gradually forced the horses to slow up.

At last he succeeded in getting them to stop.

He looked back and smiled reassuringly at the girl.

"You are absolutely safe now," he said; "have no fears."

"Oh, I am so glad!" half gasped the girl. "I thought that I would surely lose my life. You are a brave, brave young man, and I thank you for saving my life!"

"You are more than welcome, miss."

Then, as the Liberty Boys came running up and seized hold of the horses' bits, George leaped to the ground and advanced to the side of the carriage.

Dick Slater was already there, and to George's surprise, was standing beside the carriage shaking hands with the young lady.

"George," said Dick, "this is Miss Crowley, of whom you heard me speak yesterday evening in camp—the young lady who saved me from being captured in Richmond, as you will remember."

"Oh, yes!" said George, eagerly. His eyes were fixed on the girl's face in admiration, and to himself he was saying that she was the most beautiful young lady he had ever seen.

"Miss Crowley, this is Mr. George Fenner," went on Dick; "when I tell you that he is as generous and noble-

hearted as he is brave, you will understand that there is nothing further that need be said."

"I am very, very glad to be able to give you my hand, Mr. Fenner," said the girl, earnestly; "you——"

"Oh, what a lucky fellow you are, George!" exclaimed the irrepressible Bob, who, seeing a chance to say something bright, could not resist it; "but you deserve it, old fellow."

Miss Crowley blushed like a peony and George flushed also, and then they laughed, which relieved them of any feeling of embarrassment they would otherwise have felt.

"You have misinterpreted my meaning, sir," said Alice, shaking her finger at Bob in a mock-threatening manner. "I merely meant that I was glad to have the opportunity of shaking Mr. Fenner's hand."

"You see, Bob, my luck was not very lasting," said George, smilingly.

"Permit me to again thank you for saving my life," said Alice, who was eager to get the conversation turned into other channels.

"It is I who should thank you, Miss Crowley," said George, gallantly, and with a look that caused the girl's eyes to droop; "I shall always look upon this affair as the most fortunate one in my life. Saving your life is something to remember always with pleasure."

"How did the runaway happen, Miss Crowley?" asked Dick.

"A dog ran out and frightened the horses at a house a mile back up the road," was the reply. "The horses swerved aside, and the left front wheel ran over the end of a log, which caused an upheaval of the front end of the carriage, throwing the driver headfirst out into the road, and there is no telling what might have happened had not Mr. Fenner stopped them, as he so bravely did."

"I wonder if the driver was killed or badly injured?" remarked Dick.

"I don't know, Mr. Slater. I was so badly frightened that I did not think to look back."

"Yonder he comes now!" said Mark Morrison at this juncture. "He is limping, but is evidently not much injured."

"Oh, I am so glad of that," said Alice. "He is a faithful servant, and I would dislike to see him dead or severely hurt."

The driver was soon on the spot, and when he learned that his young mistress was uninjured, and that no damage had been done to the horses, to themselves or the carriage he was delighted.

"I tried to keep my seat, Miss Alice," he said; "but I couldn't do it. It broke my heart, almost, to see the horses running away without any one on the driver's seat. I thought that you would surely be killed."

"You were not to blame," the girl hastened to assure him; "I am very glad that you were not hurt."

Then the driver got up on the seat and took hold of the

lines, ready to drive back toward the city as soon as his young mistress was ready.

She turned to George and said:

"I hope to see you at my home in Richmond some day, and soon, Mr. Fenner, so that my parents may have the opportunity of thanking you for what you have done for me to-day."

"I shall be glad to come, Miss Crowley," was the reply, in such an eager tone that the Liberty Boys smiled and the young lady blushed; "I will come, even if I have to run the gauntlet of the British sentinels."

"Don't risk your life," she added, rather seriously. "Come, if you can do so with safety."

"He will be there, Miss Crowley," said Bob, with a smile.

"Yes, I will be there sooner or later, Miss Crowley," said George, and there was a deep meaning in the tones of his voice. That Miss Crowley understood this was evident, for she blushed slightly, and then, to hide her confusion, said to the driver:

"You may turn the horses around; we will return to the city."

The driver obeyed, and then at a signal from the young woman, he brought the horses to a stop.

"I forgot to ask what has brought you away down here," said the girl, addressing Dick.

"We have been hunting redcoats," was the reply.

"And you have found none?"

"Not to-day."

"You are going to continue to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Well, I hope you will have better success."

"So do I."

A few more words, and then the young lady gave the order to drive on, and the driver obeyed.

Alice bowed and smiled at the Liberty Boys, and they with one accord doffed their hats, waved their hands and said good-by in unison.

Then they made their way back to the encampment, the youths chaffing George Fenner as they went.

He took it all good-naturedly and laughed as much as any of them, and had repartee ready in most instances.

"You are a lucky fellow, George," said Dick, when they were back in the encampment; "I think you have won the regards of Miss Crowley, and if you care for her—as it seems clear that you do—it is my honest belief that you can win her. You have my best wishes for your success, and my congratulations in case you do succeed."

"And mine!"

"It's the same here!"

"Yes, yes!"

"You are all right, George!"

"You can win, and you deserve to win!"

Such were a few of the exclamations from the youths. They liked George, and were glad that he was in a fair way to be very happy.

"Thank you, boys," said George, earnestly; "I know

that you mean it, and that I have your good will and best wishes, and I don't mind telling you that I have taken a fancy to Miss Crowley, and that I am going to win her if I can."

"That's the way to talk," said Bob Estabrook. "Success to you, old fellow."

The others all echoed the remark.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRITISH EVACUATE RICHMOND.

The next day the Liberty Boys put in the day looking for parties of redcoats, and they were successful, in that they encountered two parties and put both to flight, after killing and wounding several.

The members of the awkward squad acquitted themselves splendidly.

They fought like veterans, and when it was over Dick complimented them.

"You boys did all right," said Dick.

"So they did," agreed Bob Estabrook.

"I'm glad ye air satersfied with the way we done, Dick," said Joe Skupp.

"I am more than satisfied. I am well pleased, Joe. You boys are all right."

The new recruits were delighted, and each and every one made up his mind that he would do even better next time.

"Are you going to stay down here another day, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Yes, Bob."

"You think more parties will come this way?"

"Yes; those two parties that we routed to-day will tell about us, and others will come down to-morrow to look for us."

"They will come in such force that we will be unable to cope with them, don't you think?"

"Oh, I don't know; we will be able to have the advantage of position, you know."

"Yes, and that amounts to a good deal."

"So it does."

Next morning Dick and Bob went about a mile in the direction of Richmond, for they expected to see some parties of redcoats coming from that direction before the day was very far advanced.

They took up their position on top of a hill. From there they could see a mile, the road being straight that distance.

They were there an hour or more, and then Bob suddenly exclaimed:

"Yonder comes a party, Dick."

Dick, who had been sitting down, rose and looked.

"You are right," he agreed. "Let's wait and see about how strong a force it is."

"All right."

They waited and watched.

They saw the redcoats coming along at a good steady pace, and to their amazement it did not prove to be a party, but an army. What they had supposed was a small party sent out to search for them was simply the advance guard of the British army that had been in Richmond.

The youths were mazed.

They could not think what it meant.

"It must be Arnold's entire army, Dick!" said Bob, looking wonderingly at his comrade.

"So it is, Bob, I am confident."

"But what does it mean? Do they think it will take the entire army to thrash us?"

Dick shook his head.

"I think it means something else, Bob. In my opinion, the army has vacated Richmond."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; though why it should do so is more than I can imagine."

"Perhaps Arnold is going south to join Cornwallis."

"That is possible; but where could he be headed for?"

"There is a town fifteen miles south of Richmond—Petersburg. They may be going there."

"That's so; and Cornwallis may be there."

"Yes, or expecting to be there soon."

"Well, the thing for us to do is to get back to the encampment and get out of the way of the coming army."

"True; we can't fight the entire British army."

"No."

The youths, having seen all that it was necessary for them to see, turned and hastened back to the encampment.

"We must get ready as quickly as possible and get away from here," said Dick; "the entire British army is coming!"

The youths did not know what to think when they heard this, but they said nothing; they quickly bridled and saddled their horses and were soon ready to evacuate the encampment.

Dick did not order the Liberty Boys to mount; instead, he told them to lead the horses back into the timber a couple of hundred yards, and this was done.

Then he and Bob returned to the vicinity of the encampment and took up their position where they could see the army as it passed.

The advance guard appeared soon and passed slowly, and behind it came the army proper.

The youths waited patiently until the rear of the long column was in sight, half a mile away, and then they made their way back to where the rest of the Liberty Boys were waiting.

"I have made up my mind to strike the rear end of the British column and then mount quickly and ride rapidly up the road," explained Dick. "The troopers are a mile away, and they will not be able to do us any damage."

This idea was a pleasing one to the Liberty Boys.

They wished to strike the British a blow, and they lost no time in leading the horses close to the road—as close as was possible, and at the same time avoid discovery.

Then they waited until the end of the column was even with them.

The time had come to act.

They moved forward, leading the horses, and at a signal from Dick they leveled their muskets and took aim.

Suddenly Dick gave utterance to a shrill whistle.

This was the signal to fire, and the youths obeyed.

Bang! Bang!

The British soldiers were within range, and a number went down dead and wounded.

The ranks of the redcoats were thrown into confusion.

The British had not been expecting an attack.

Before they could regain their presence of mind the Liberty Boys had mounted and were riding away up the road at a gallop.

As they went they gave utterance to cheers, winding up with their battle cry of:

"Long live liberty! Down with the king!"

The British were so enraged that they fired a volley, but of course they did no damage; the youths were out of range.

The British hardly knew what to think about this affair.

When they saw that the enemy consisted of about one hundred soldiers on horseback, however, many of them at once leaped to the conclusion that the party consisted of the Liberty Boys.

The news of the attack traveled along the column of soldiers with the speed of the wind, and soon reached the ears of General Arnold.

He knew at once that it was the Liberty Boys who had made the attack, and he ordered a force of troopers to turn back and go in pursuit of the youths.

This was done, but the troopers might as well have saved themselves the trouble. They could not catch up with the Liberty Boys.

Presently they gave up the pursuit and turned back.

Dick was watching, and as soon as he saw that the British had ceased pursuing he gave the command to halt.

The Liberty Boys did so.

"I have made up my mind that we will follow the British and see where they go," he said; "incidentally we may strike them an occasional blow as we go along, also."

"That's the way to talk, Dick," said Bob, approvingly.

"There is one thing that must be done at once, however," went on Dick, "and that is that General Lafayette must be informed of this move of the British. Then he can march down and take possession of Richmond."

"That's so," agreed Bob.

"Mark, you will go at once and carry the news to General Lafayette," said Dick, addressing Mark Morrison.

"All right, Dick," was the reply. Then, without more words, the youth rode away toward the north.

The Liberty Boys turned their horses' heads toward the south and rode slowly after the British army.

The British were on their guard now, and it was an impossibility for the Liberty Boys to slip up and fire a volley and get away without a return; so they stayed back and took it easy.

"We will see where they go, at any rate," said Dick; "even though we don't get a chance to do them any more damage."

Meanwhile Mark Morrison rode northward at a gallop. He entered the city of Richmond, but did not stop there.

He continued onward and an hour later rode into the patriot encampment.

He went at once to the tent occupied by General Lafayette, and was admitted.

"What is it, Mark?" the general asked, when he had greeted his visitor.

"The British have evacuated Richmond, sir," said Mark.

"Is that so?" in a voice of excitement; "when did they do this?"

"This morning."

"And where have they gone?"

"They are marching southward, sir; Dick says he thinks they are headed for Petersburg."

"Ha! For Petersburg, eh?"

"Yes; it is Dick's idea that they are to join Cornwallis' army there."

Lafayette looked thoughtful.

"I should not be surprised if this were the case," he said. "Well, we will at once break camp and march down and take possession of Richmond."

He sent his orderly to give the officers instructions and then made some more inquiries of Mark.

When the youth told him that the Liberty Boys were following the British army Lafayette looked sober.

"I'm afraid the boys will get into trouble," he said. "They are so fearless and daring."

"I don't think there is much danger, sir. Dick Slater is too smart to permit himself to be outgeneraled."

"True; Dick is a shrewd youth."

An hour later the patriot army was marching toward Richmond, and two hours later still it entered the city and took possession in the name of liberty and the Continental congress.

CHAPTER XII.

BACK IN RICHMOND.

"You were right regarding the destination of the British, Dick."

"Yes; they have taken up their quarters in Petersburg."

"And do you think that Cornwallis is to join them there?"

"I think so; though it is impossible to say just when he will put in an appearance."

"I suppose we will stay in the vicinity until Cornwallis does come?"

"Yes; and then I will send word to General Lafayette."

"What will we do while waiting?"

"Keep watch for foraging bands of redcoats."

"There is something else that we might do, Dick."

"What?"

"Keep gathering up new recruits."

"Yes; we might do that, Bob."

"And if we have a battle with the British we will need every man we can get hold of."

"That is true."

It was afternoon of the day on which the British evacuated Richmond.

They had taken up their position in Petersburg, and the Liberty Boys had paused a mile from the town and gone into temporary camp.

Dick and Bob had gone ahead and were on a knoll half a mile from the town.

The two youths, having seen all that was possible for them to see, now made their way back to the Liberty Boys' encampment.

It was decided to try to get a lot of new recruits while remaining in the vicinity to watch the redcoats, and so a dozen parties of four each left the encampment and went away in as many different directions.

When they returned a couple of hours later they had twenty youths, who announced their desire to become patriot soldiers.

Dick told them that he would be glad to have them join his company of Liberty Boys, but that they would have to be drilled before they could take part in any engagements.

They said that they wanted to learn to be soldiers, and Dick said that he would teach them.

Next morning he began the work, and the Liberty Boys watched the maneuvers of the awkward squad with interest and no small degree of amusement.

The blunders made by the new recruits were many and varied, and the spectators had plenty of opportunity to laugh.

Dick had sent a couple of youths to keep watch of the British in Petersburg, and about the middle of the afternoon one of these scouts came to the encampment and told Dick that a large army had entered Petersburg from the south.

"It is Cornwallis' army," said Dick. "I must send word to General Lafayette."

He looked around him in search of some one to send as messenger, and his eyes fell upon George Fenner. There was such an eager look on the youth's face that Dick could not help smiling.

"Yes," he said; "I will send you, George—and you need not hurry back. I think you might as well spend a few hours in the city and rest up a bit."

"Thank you, Dick," said George, gratefully. "I will start at once."

He bridled and saddled his horse, and mounted and rode away at a gallop.

Two hours later he was in Richmond.

He went at once to patriot headquarters.

General Lafayette gave him a cordial greeting and then asked what news he brought.

"Captain Dick Slater sent me to inform you of the fact that General Cornwallis' army has arrived at Petersburg," was the reply.

"So he has arrived at last, has he?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good; I am glad to know this. When you go back tell Dick that I said for him to keep close watch on the British, and if they make a move as though to advance to Richmond send me word promptly."

"Very well, sir."

General Lafayette asked a number of questions, and then George saluted and withdrew.

He made his way to the home of Alice Crowley, and when he got there he was given a welcome that made him feel happy indeed.

Alice sent a servant to inform her parents of the presence of the young man who had saved her life by stopping the runaway horses, and the two soon put in an appearance.

They greeted the young man very cordially and thanked him earnestly for what he had done for their daughter.

He told them that no thanks were necessary, and that he had done only his duty, and that any one else would have done the same thing. The girl's parents insisted, however, that they were under great obligations to him, and they treated him very cordially, for they realized that he was a brave, noble-hearted youth.

They left the parlor presently, and Alice and George had the room to themselves.

That they were well pleased to have it so was amply proven by the happy look on their countenances.

The time flew, and when supper was announced they were surprised, for they had not supposed it was anywhere near so late.

George was for taking his leave, but Alice would not hear to this; nor would her parents, who entered the parlor to lead the way to the dining-room.

George was a common-sense youth, and he accepted the invitation to dine, and to say that he enjoyed the meal is stating the case altogether too mildly. He was the happiest youth in Virginia.

He remained at least two hours after supper was over, and then took his leave reluctantly. He was in love with Alice, and she was in love with him. He did not know when he would get to see her again, so he told her of his love and asked her to be his wife. It was rather sudden, as Alice said; but she was a sensible girl, and told him that she loved him and would become his wife as soon as he was mustered out of the army.

This was sufficient, and George left the Crowley home as though treading on air.

He mounted his horse, which he had had taken care of at a livery stable, and rode out of the city and away toward the south at a lively pace.

Two hours later he was in the Liberty Boys' encampment, and he reported to Dick, who was still up.

He told Dick what the general had said about keeping watch of the redcoats and reporting to him, and Dick said he would attend to the matter.

Next day Joe Skupp asked permission of Dick to go on a foraging expedition. He wanted to take the awkward squad.

"We hain't much on ther fight, Dick; but we kin forage fur grub ez good ez enny uv ye."

"All right," said Dick; "go along; but be careful. Don't let the redcoats get you."

"We'll look out fur ther redcoats, Dick."

The youths set out. There were forty of them, and they took their muskets along, so as to be in a position to offer fight if they should encounter any British soldiers.

They found the home of a Tory and helped themselves to a lot of provisions, after which they started to go back to the Liberty Boys' encampment.

They had gone only half a mile when they suddenly came face to face with a force of British soldiers about equal in size to their own force.

The youths darted in among the trees at the roadside, and the British soldiers did the same.

Then both parties opened fire at practically the same time, and they kept it up for quite awhile.

The Liberty Boys' awkward squad did good work. They were better at this style of warfare than was the case with the redcoats, and they were better marksmen, so the result was that they did more damage, wounding a number of the British soldiers and killing one.

Suddenly about fifty of the Liberty Boys came running down the road.

The encounter had taken place at a point less than a mile from the Liberty Boys' encampment, and they had heard the firing and had guessed that the members were greatly outnumbered, and turned and fled at the top of their speed.

The Liberty Boys and the members of the awkward squad pursued the redcoats a short distance, and then gave up the chase and went back to the scene of the encounter.

Dick, who was one of those who had come to the assistance of the new recruits, complimented the youths on their good work.

"You held your own, and that was doing well," he said.

"I guess we done a leetle bit more than held our own," said Joe Skupp; "we killed one uv 'em, an' they didn't kill enny uv us."

"That's so; you did get the best of it, sure enough."

Then they buried the dead redcoats, after which they made their way back to the Liberty Boys' encampment.

The provisions secured by the members of the awkward squad were sufficient to furnish food for all of the Liberty Boys for several meals, and were very acceptable.

The Liberty Boys remained in camp near Petersburg until the British army moved northward toward Richmond, and then they retreated to the city and informed General Lafayette that the redcoats were coming to attack Richmond.

A council was held, and it was decided that it would be foolish to try to make a stand. To evacuate and retreat toward the north was the only thing to do.

So the order was given to break camp and get ready to march, and the soldiers obeyed the order.

Before leaving the city George Fenner went and called on his sweetheart and spent two or three hours in her company. She was sorry to hear that the British were coming, both because she did not like for them to be in the city, and because it forced her lover to leave the vicinity.

She was brave, however, and put on as bold a front as possible and sent George away in good spirits.

Our story is practically ended.

Cornwallis' army came to Richmond and gave chase to Lafayette's army, and this was kept up until the patriots had crossed the Rapidan river, when the British gave up and turned back.

Of course numerous skirmishes were inevitable in such circumstances, and the Liberty Boys were always mixed up in the fights; and the awkward squad usually did some good fighting also, with the result that it was looked upon as a very valuable addition to the Liberty Boys' company.

When the war ended George Fenner hastened back to Richmond and was married to sweet Alice Crowley; and Joe Skupp, not to be outdone, was married to Annie Stokes.

Lafayette, while he did not do a great deal of fighting during this campaign, managed to keep Cornwallis and his army busy quite awhile, and this was important, as it made it impossible for the British to turn their attention in some other direction.

And as has been shown, the Liberty Boys and their Awkward Squad did their share of the good work.

THE END.

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